

A London Magazine for Town and Country Readers.

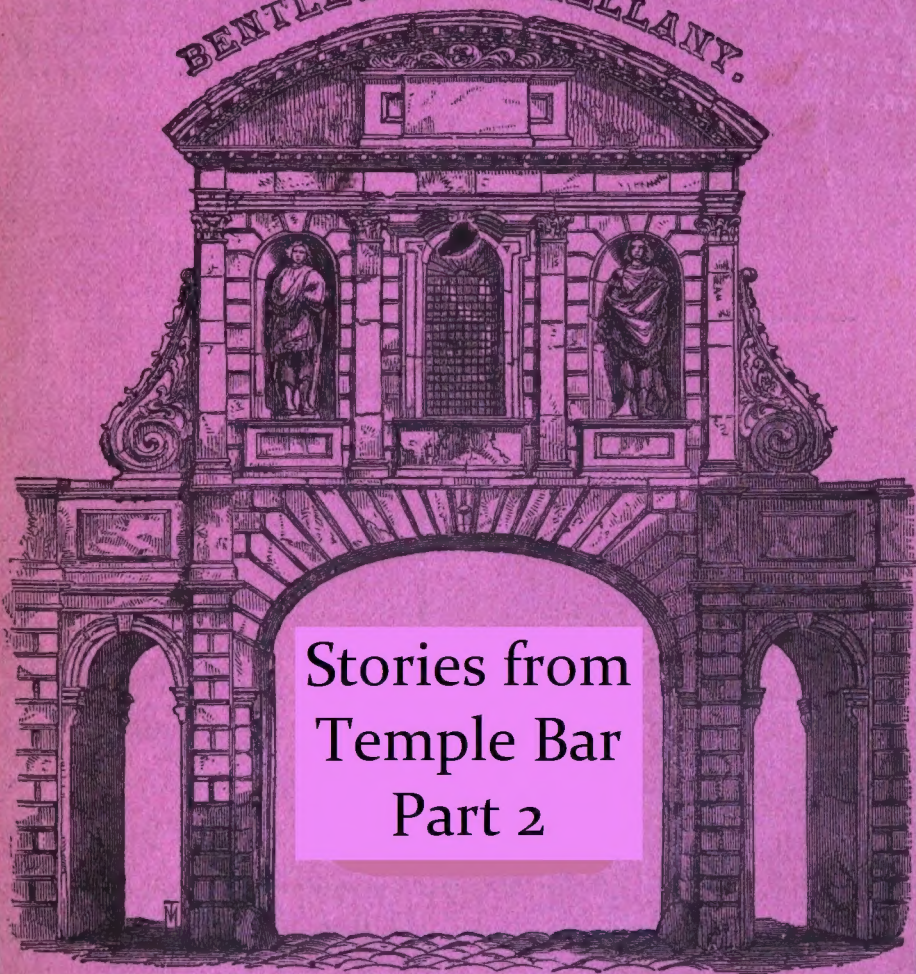
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NO. 342.

TEMPLE BAR

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

BENTLEY'S MISCELLANY.



Stories from
Temple Bar
Part 2

LONDON.

RICHARD BENTLEY & SON, NEW BURLINGTON ST., W.

PUBLISHERS IN ORDINARY TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN.

Stories from Temple Bar, Part 2 (1868-1872)

The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth by Rhoda

Broughton - February 1868

The Haunted Garden by Miss Wilton - September 1868

Not a Dream by Albany Fonblanque - September 1869

The Three Souls by Erckmann-Chatrian. Translated by H. Horbury -

October 1869

Walpurga's Night by Heinrich Zschokke. Translated by Emily

Montgomery - February 1870

The Dog by Ivan Turguenief. Translated by W. R. S. Ralston - March 1870

The Idiot by Ivan Turguenief. Translated by W. R. S. Ralston - May 1870

The Invisible Eye by Erckmann-Chatrian. Translated by C. Smith

Cheltnam - December 1870

A Ghostly Night at Ballyslaughter by John Sheehan - January 1871

The Buried Treasure by Erckmann-Chatrian. Translated by C. Smith

Cheltnam - March 1871

A Page from the Book of Folly by Richard Garnett - April 1871

The Child-Stealer by Erckmann-Chatrian. Translated by C. Smith

Cheltnam - April 1871

The Enchantress of Syracuse by John Sheehan (poem) - October 1871

Hans Schnaps' Spy-Glass by Erckmann-Chatrian. Translated by C. Smith

Cheltnam - October 1871

The Mysterious Sketch by Erckmann-Chatrian. Translated by Mrs. Mary

Anne Hoare - January 1872

Sworn on the Crucifix by Honoré de Balzac. Translation of La Grande

Bretèche by W. J. Greenwell - June 1872

The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "COMETH UP AS A FLOWER."

MRS. DE WYNT TO MRS. MONTRESOR.

"18, Eccleston Square,

"May 5th.

"MY DEAREST CECILIA,

"Talk of the friendships of Orestes and Pylades, of Julie and Claire, what are they to ours? Did Pylades ever go *ventre à terre*, half over London on a day more broiling than any but an *âme damnée* could even imagine, in order that Orestes might be comfortably housed for the season? Did Claire ever hold sweet converse with from fifty to one hundred house agents, in order that Julie might have three windows to her drawing-room and a pretty *portière*. You see I am determined not to be done out of my full meed of gratitude.

"Well, my friend, I had no idea till yesterday how closely we were packed in this great smoky bee-hive, as tightly as herrings in a barrel. Don't be frightened, however. By dint of squeezing and crowding, we have managed to make room for two more herrings in our barrel, and those two are yourself and your other self, *i.e.* your husband. Let me begin at the beginning. After having looked over, I verily believe, every undesirable residence in West London; after having seen nothing intermediate between what was suited to the means of a duke, and what was suited to the needs of a chimney-sweep; after having felt bed-ticking, and explored kitchen ranges till my brain reeled under my accumulated experience, I arrived at about half-past five yesterday afternoon at 32, — Street, May Fair.

"'Failure No. 253, I don't doubt,' I said to myself, as I toiled up the steps with my soul athirst for afternoon tea, and feeling as ill-tempered as you please. So much for my spirit of prophecy. Fate, I have noticed, is often fond of contradicting us flat, and giving the lie to our little predictions. Once inside, I thought I had got into a small compartment of Heaven by mistake. Fresh as a daisy, clean as a cherry, bright as a Seraph's face, it is all these, and a hundred more, only that my limited stock of similes is exhausted. Two drawing-rooms as pretty as ever woman crammed with people she did not care two straws about; white curtains with rose-coloured ones underneath, festooned in the sweetest way; marvellously, *immorally* becoming,

my dear, as I ascertained entirely for your benefit, in the mirrors, of which there are about a dozen and a half; Persian mats, easy chairs, and lounges suited to every possible physical conformation, from the Apollo Belvedere to Miss Biffin; and a thousand of the important little trivialities that make up the sum of a woman's life: ormolu garden gates, handleless cups, naked boys and décolleté shepherdesses; not to speak of a family of china pugs, with blue ribbons round their necks, which ought of themselves to have added fifty pounds a year to the rent. Apropos, I asked, in fear and trembling, what the rent might be—"three hundred pounds a year." A feather would have knocked me down. I could hardly believe my ears, and made the woman repeat it several times, that there might be no mistake. To this hour it is a mystery to me.

"With that suspiciousness, which is so characteristic of you, you will immediately begin to hint that there must be some terrible unaccountable smell, or some odious inexplicable noise haunting the reception rooms. Nothing of the kind, the woman assured me, and she did not look as if she were telling stories. You will next suggest—remembering the rose-coloured curtains—that its last occupant was a member of the demi-monde. Wrong again. Its last occupant was an elderly and unexceptionable Indian officer, without a liver, and with a most lawful wife. They did not stay long, it is true, but then, as the housekeeper told me, he was a deplorable old hypochondriac, who never could bear to stay a fortnight in any one place. So lay aside that scepticism, which is your besetting sin, and give unfeigned thanks to St. Brigitta, or St. Gengulpha, or St. Catherine of Sienna, or whoever is your tutelar saint, for having provided you with a palace at the cost of a hovel, and for having sent you such an invaluable friend as

"Your attached,

"ELIZABETH DE WYNT."

"P.S.—I am so sorry I shall not be in town to witness your first raptures, but dear Artie looks so pale and thin and tall after the hooping-cough, that I am sending him off at once to the sea, and as I cannot bear the child out of my sight, I am going into banishment likewise."

MRS. MONTRESOR TO MRS. DE WYNT.

"32, — Street, May Fair,

"May 14th.

"DEAREST BESSY,

"Why did not dear little Artie defer his hooping-cough convalescence, &c., till August? It is very odd, to me, the perverse way

in which children always fix upon the most inconvenient times and seasons for their diseases. Here we are installed in our Paradise, and have searched high and low, in every hole and corner, for the serpent, without succeeding in catching a glimpse of his spotted tail. Most things in this world are disappointing, but 32, — Street, May Fair, is not. The mystery of the rent is still a mystery. I have been for my first ride in the Row this morning: my horse was a little fidgety; I am half afraid that my nerve is not what it was. I saw heaps of people I knew. Do you recollect Florence Watson? What a wealth of red hair she had last year! Well, that same wealth is black as the raven's wing this year! I wonder how people can make such walking impositions of themselves, don't you? Adela comes to us next week; I am so glad. It is dull driving by oneself of an afternoon; and I always think that one young woman alone in a brougham, or with only a dog beside her, does not look *good*. We sent round our cards a fortnight before we came up, and have been already deluged with callers. Considering that we have been two years exiled from civilized life, and that London memories are not generally of the longest, we shall do pretty well, I think. Ralph Gordon came to see me on Sunday; he is in the —th Hussars now. He has grown up such a *dear* fellow, and so good-looking! Just my style, large and fair and whiskerless! Most men nowadays make themselves as like monkies, or Scotch terriers, as they possibly can. I intend to be quite a *mother* to him. Dresses are gored to as *indecent* an extent as ever; short skirts are rampant. I am so sorry; I hate them. They make tall women look *lank*, and short ones insignificant. A knock! Peace is a word that might as well be expunged from one's London dictionary.

“Yours affectionately,

“CECILIA MONTRESOR.”

MRS. DE WYNT TO MRS. MONTRESOR.

“The Lord Warden, Dover,

“May 18th.

“DEAREST CECILIA,

“You will perceive that I am about to devote only one small sheet of note-paper to you. This is from no dearth of time, Heaven knows! time is a drug in the market here, but from a total dearth of ideas. Any ideas that I ever have, come to me from without, from external objects; I am not clever enough to generate any within myself. My life here is not an eminently suggestive one. It is spent

in digging with a wooden spade, and eating prawns. Those are my employments, at least; my relaxation is going down to the Pier, to see the Calais boat come in. When one is miserable oneself, it is decidedly consolatory to see some one more miserable still; and wretched, and bored, and reluctant vegetable as I am, I am not *sea-sick*. I always feel my spirits rise after having seen that peevish, draggled procession of blue, green and yellow fellow-Christians file past me. There is a wind here *always*, in comparison of which the wind that behaved so violently to the corners of Job's house was a mere zephyr. There are heights to climb which require more daring perseverance than ever Wolfe displayed, with his paltry heights of Abraham. There are glaring white houses, glaring white roads, glaring white cliffs. If any one knew how unpatriotically I detest the chalk-cliffs of Albion! Having grumbled through my two little pages—I have actually been reduced to writing very large in order to fill even them—I will send off my dreary little billet. How I wish I could get into the envelope myself too, and whirl up with it to dear, beautiful, filthy London. Not more heavily could Madame de Staël have sighed for Paris from among the shades of Coppet.

“Your disconsolate Bessy.”

MRS. MONTRESOR TO MRS. DE WYNT.

“32, — Street, May Fair,

“May 27th.

“Oh, my dearest Bessy, how I wish we were out of this dreadful, dreadful house! Please don't think me very ungrateful for saying this, after your taking such pains to provide us with a Heaven upon earth, as you thought.

“What has happened could, of course, have been neither foretold, nor guarded against, by any human being. About ten days ago, Benson (my maid) came to me with a very long face, and said, ‘If you please, ’m, did you know that this house was *haunted*?’ I was so startled: you know what a coward I am. I said, ‘Good Heavens! No! is it?’ ‘Well, ’m, I'm pretty nigh sure it is,’ she said, and the expression of her countenance was about as lively as an undertaker's; and then she told me that cook had been that morning to order in groceries from a shop in the neighbourhood, and on her giving the man the direction where to send the things to, he had said, with a very peculiar smile, ‘No. 32, — Street, eh? h'm! I wonder how long *you'll* stand it; last lot held out just a fortnight.’ He looked so odd that she asked him what he meant, but he only said ‘Oh!

nothing; only that parties never *did* stay long at 32. He had known parties go in one day, and out the next, and during the last four years he had never known any remain over the month.' Feeling a good deal alarmed by this information, she naturally inquired the reason; but he declined to give it, saying that if she had not found it out for herself, she had much better leave it alone, as it would only frighten her out of her wits; and on her insisting and urging him, she could only extract from him, that the house had such a villanously bad name, that the owners were glad to let it for a mere song. You know how firmly I believe in apparitions, and what an unutterable fear I have of them; anything material, tangible, that I can lay hold of—anything of the same fibre, blood, and bone as myself, I could, I think, confront bravely enough; but the mere thought of being brought face to face with the 'bodiless dead,' makes my brain unsteady. The moment Henry came in, I ran to him, and told him; but he pooh-poohed the whole story, laughed at me, and asked whether we should turn out of the prettiest house in London, at the very height of the season, because a grocer said it had a bad name. Most good things that had ever been in the world had had a bad name in their day; and, moreover, the man had probably a motive for taking away the house's character, some friend for whom he coveted the charming situation and the low rent. He derided my 'babyish fears,' as he called them, to such an extent that I felt half ashamed, and yet not quite comfortable, either; and then came the usual rush of London engagements, during which one has no time to think of anything but how to speak, and act, and look for the moment then present. Adela was to arrive yesterday, and in the morning our weekly hamper of flowers, fruit, and vegetables arrived from home. I always dress the flower-vases myself, servants are so tasteless; and as I was arranging them, it occurred to me—you know Adela's passion for flowers—to carry up one particular cornucopia of roses and mignonette and set it on her toilet-table, as a pleasant surprise for her. As I came downstairs, I had seen the housemaid—a fresh, round-faced country girl—go into the room, which was being prepared for Adela, with a pair of sheets that she had been airing over her arm. I went upstairs very slowly, as my cornucopia was full of water, and I was afraid of spilling some. I turned the handle of the bedroom-door and entered, keeping my eyes fixed on my flowers, to see how they bore the transit, and whether any of them had fallen out. Suddenly a sort of shiver passed over me; and feeling frightened—I did not know why—I looked up quickly. The girl was standing by the bed, leaning forward a little with her hands clenched in each other, rigid, every nerve tense; her eyes, wide open, starting out of her head, and a look of unutterable stony horror in them; her cheeks and mouth not pale, but livid as those of one that died awhile ago in mortal pain. As

I looked at her, her lips moved a little, and an awful hoarse voice, not like hers in the least, said, 'Oh! my God, I have seen it!' and then she fell down suddenly, like a log, with a heavy noise. Hearing the noise, loudly audible all through the thin walls and floors of a London house, Benson came running in, and between us we managed to lift her on to the bed, and tried to bring her to herself by rubbing her feet and hands, and holding strong salts to her nostrils. And all the while we kept glancing over our shoulders, in a vague cold terror of seeing some awful, shapeless apparition. Two long hours she lay in a state of utter unconsciousness. Meanwhile Harry, who had been down to his club, returned. At the end of the two hours we succeeded in bringing her back to sensation and life, but only to make the awful discovery that she was raving mad. She became so violent that it required all the combined strength of Harry and Phillips (our butler) to hold her down in the bed. Of course, we sent off instantly for a doctor, who, on her growing a little calmer towards evening, removed her in a cab to his own house. He has just been here to tell me that she is now pretty quiet, not from any return to sanity, but from sheer exhaustion. We are, of course, utterly in the dark as to *what* she saw, and her ravings are far too disconnected and unintelligible to afford us the slightest clue. I feel so completely shattered and upset by this awful occurrence, that you will excuse me, dear, I'm sure, if I write incoherently. One thing, I need hardly tell you, and that is, that no earthly consideration would induce me to allow Adela to occupy that terrible room. I shudder and run by quickly as I pass the door.

"Yours, in great agitation,

"CECILIA."

MRS. DE WYNT TO MRS. MONTRESOR.

"The Lord Warden, Dover,

"May 28th.

"DEAREST CECILIA,

"Yours just come; how very dreadful! But I am still unconvinced as to the house being in fault. You know I feel a sort of godmother to it, and responsible for its good behaviour. Don't you think that what the girl had might have been a fit? Why not? I myself have a cousin who is subject to seizures of the kind, and immediately on being attacked his whole body becomes rigid, his eyes glassy and staring, his complexion livid, exactly as in the case you describe. Or, if not a fit, are you sure that she has not been subject

to fits of madness? *Please* be sure and ascertain whether there is not insanity in her family. It is so common now-a-days, and so much on the increase, that nothing is more likely. You know my utter disbelief in ghosts. I am convinced that most of them, if run to earth, would turn out about as genuine as the famed Cock Lane one. But even allowing the possibility, nay, the actual unquestioned existence of ghosts in the abstract, is it likely that there should be anything to be seen so horribly fear-inspiring, as to send a perfectly sane person *in one instant* raving mad, which you, after three weeks' residence in the house, have never caught a glimpse of? According to your hypothesis, your whole household ought, by this time, to be stark, staring mad. Let me implore you not to give way to a panic which may, possibly, probably prove utterly groundless. Oh, how I wish I were with you, to make you listen to reason! Artie ought to be the best prop ever woman's old age was furnished with, to indemnify me, for all he and his hooping-cough have made me suffer. Write immediately, please, and tell me how the poor patient progresses. Oh, had I the wings of a dove! I shall be on wires till I hear again.

"Yours,

"BESSY."

MRS. MONTRESOR TO MRS. DE WYNT.

"No. 5, Bolton Street, Piccadilly,

"June 12th.

"DEAREST BESSY,

"You will see that we have left that terrible, hateful, fatal house. How I wish we had escaped from it sooner! Oh, my dear Bessy, I shall never be the same woman again if I live to be a hundred. Let me try to be coherent, and to tell you connectedly what has happened. And first, as to the housemaid, she has been removed to a lunatic asylum, where she remains in much the same state. She has had several lucid intervals, and during them has been closely, pressingly questioned as to what it was she saw; but she has maintained an absolute, hopeless silence, and only shudders, moans, and hides her face in her hands when the subject is broached. Three days ago I went to see her, and on my return was sitting resting in the drawing-room, before going to dress for dinner, talking to Adela about my visit, when Ralph Gordon walked in. He has always been walking in the last ten days, and Adela has always flushed up and looked happy, poor little cat, whenever he made his appearance. He looked very handsome, dear fellow, just come in from the park in a

coat that fitted like a second skin, lavender gloves, and a gardenia. He seemed in tremendous spirits, and was as sceptical as even you could be, as to the ghostly origin of Sarah's seizure. 'Let me come here to-night and sleep in that room; *do*, Mrs. Montresor,' he said, looking very eager and excited, 'with the gas lit and a poker, I'll engage to exorcise every demon that shows his ugly nose; even if I should find

Seven white ghostisses
Sitting on seven white postisses.

"'You don't mean really?' I asked, incredulously. 'Don't I? that's all,' he answered, emphatically. 'I should like nothing better. Well, is it a bargain?' Adela turned quite pale. 'Oh, don't,' she said, hurriedly, '*please*, don't; why should you run such a risk? How do you know that you might not be sent mad too?' He laughed very heartily, and coloured a little with pleasure at seeing the interest she took in his safety. 'Never fear,' he said, 'it would take more than a whole squadron of departed ones, with the old gentleman at their head, to send me crazy.' He was so eager, so persistent, so thoroughly in earnest, that I yielded at last, though with a certain strong reluctance to his entreaties. Adela's blue eyes filled with tears, and she walked away hastily to the conservatory, and stood picking bits of heliotrope to hide them. Nevertheless, Ralph got his own way; it was so difficult to refuse him anything. We gave up all our engagements for the evening, and he did the same with his. At about ten o'clock he arrived, accompanied by a friend and brother officer, Captain Burton, who was anxious to see the result of the experiment. 'Let me go up at once,' he said, looking very happy and animated. 'I don't know when I have felt in such good tune; a new sensation is a luxury not to be had every day of one's life; turn the gas up as high as it will go; provide a good stout poker, and leave the issue to Providence and me.' We did as he bid. 'It's all ready now,' Henry said, coming downstairs after having obeyed his orders; 'the room is nearly as light as day. Well, good luck to you, old fellow!' 'Good-bye, Miss Bruce,' Ralph said, going over to Adela, and taking her hand with a look, half laughing, half sentimental—

Fare thee well, and if for ever,
Then for ever, fare thee well,

that is my last dying speech and confession. Now mind,' he went on, standing by the table, and addressing us all; 'if I ring once, *don't* come. I may be flurried, and lay hold of the bell without thinking; if I ring twice, *come*.' Then he went, jumping up the stairs three steps at a time, and humming a tune. As for us, we sat in different attitudes of expectation and listening about the drawing-room. At first

we tried to talk a little, but it would not do; our whole souls seemed to have passed into our ears. The clock's ticking sounded as loud as a great church bell close to one's ear. Addy lay on the sofa, with her dear little white face hidden in the cushions. So we sat for exactly an hour; but it seemed like two years, and just as the clock began to strike eleven, a sharp ting, ting, ting rang clear and shrill through the house. 'Let us go,' said Addy, starting up, and running to the door. 'Let us go,' I cried too, following her. But Captain Burton stood in the way, and intercepted our progress. 'No,' he said, decisively, 'you must not go; remember Gordon told us distinctly, if he rang once *not* to come. I know the sort of fellow he is, and that nothing would annoy him more than having his directions disregarded.'

"'Oh, nonsense!' Addy cried, passionately, 'he would never have rung if he had not seen something dreadful; do, *do* let us go!' she ended, clasping her hands. But she was overruled, and we all went back to our seats. Ten minutes more of suspense, next door to unendurable, I felt a lump in my throat, a gasping for breath;—ten minutes on the clock, but a thousand centuries on our hearts. Then again, loud, sudden, violent the bell rang! We made a simultaneous rush to the door. I don't think we were one second flying upstairs. Addy was first. Almost simultaneously she and I burst into the room. There he was, standing in the middle of the floor, rigid, petrified, with that same look—that look that is burnt into my heart in letters of fire—of awful, unspeakable, stony fear on his brave young face. For one instant he stood thus; then stretching out his arms stiffly before him, he groaned in a terrible husky voice, 'Oh, my God, I have seen it!' and fell down *dead*. Yes, *dead*. Not in a swoon or in a fit, but *dead*. Vainly we tried to bring back the life to that strong young heart; it will never come back again till that day when the earth and the sea give up the dead that are therein. I cannot see the page for the tears that are blinding me; he was such a dear fellow! I can't write any more to-day.

"Your broken-hearted CECILIA."

This is a true story.

The Haunted Garden.

WHAT is it to be haunted? Who can explain or understand the laws which regulate the "night side of nature," or trace to their source the phenomena that seem to stand beyond those ordinary facts of every-day experience, which long custom has caused us to look upon as a settled order of the universe, though they are truly all miracles and wonders, into whose remote depths we cannot penetrate? Yes; we may well ask, "What is it to be haunted?"

It were perhaps best to pass over, without comment, the most recent manifestations which the wisdom and enlightenment of this nineteenth century have produced, and to refrain from trying to fathom the shallow mysteries that require the intervention of a "medium" to interpret them, lest perchance they should rap out to us on the table an order to sign a cheque for a few hundred pounds in favour of the medium, pelt us with stale fruit and mouldy flowers, or rattle trumpets and accordions about our ears in a dark room. These beings seem, indeed, in their spiritual state, to profit so little by the expensive and liberal education bestowed on them in their life-time by their parents, and to have sunk from the entertaining, learned, and genial friends we once knew, the men of power and influence the world once admired, into such very illiterate and stupid dolts, such feeble inanities, that the less we have to do with them the less we shall expose our character and reputation to the deterioration and disgrace which necessarily arise from keeping low company.

It is, however, possible for a man or a place to be haunted. I did not believe it once, but I do now. "Oh yes!" you tell me; "one can be haunted by remorse for evil deeds, by a horrid secret, by the memory of neglected opportunities that never returned, by lost or by buried, but unforgotten, love, &c." But *I* had a haunted garden!

Don't tell me that yours is haunted too—by the cats that roll on your choice flowers, and shriek under your window at night, making you start from your pillow with your hair on an end, and with a vague sensation that murder or burglary is going on close at hand.

My garden was haunted by a plant!

Now, don't laugh and say that it was exactly the right thing to haunt a garden, and that you wish you had plenty to haunt yours. *I* had plenty before I had done with it; and to this day I turn my head away when I pass the greengrocer's, lest I should find my old enemy following me still.

You must know that when I married (it is years ago now), I bought a pleasant little villa near what is now the "Great Cheatem and Doer" southern railway terminus. It was a pretty place then, though it is a wilderness of bricks now; there was a shady lane leading to the house, and primroses grew in the hedge-bottoms in spring, though it was near enough to town for me to come home to dine after concluding business.

You remember the little strip of garden behind the house, and how it was divided from that of my neighbour on each side by a well-kept privet edge. You saw it a few months after I went to live there; and you know how nicely I laid it out with small gravel-walks and intricately-shaped beds bordered with box. Ah! my friend, when you went away to India, you little thought what trouble that small plot of ground would bring me; how one, only one, mistake in its cultivation would embitter some of the best years of my life!

"Clara," said I to my wife, "with a little garden, such as ours, it is of no use trying to grow vegetables or fruit; you know, my dear, every potato and cabbage we grew would cost us half-a-crown; and, perhaps, after all, there would not be one worth eating. Let us cultivate flowers only, and then we can look after them ourselves, and a gardener can come twice a week, just to do the rough work, and dig and rake and hoe the ground when it wants it."

"Oh yes, George!" replied my wife; "and I know of *such* a nice old man who will garden for us; he keeps a small nursery ground of his own, and he says he can spare just two days a week from his work; and then, too, he can supply us with plants as many as we like to buy. So, if you wish, we will go and see him at once and engage him, for old Mr. Dunlop, who lives next door, tells me that we ought not to miss him, and you know Mr. Dunlop cultivates choice geraniums, carnations, and pansies, which he sends to all the flower-shows in the county, and he says, if it were not that Samuel Spikenard, the gardener, nearly always has better plants than his own, he should certainly win every prize that he puts in for."

So we went to the Nursery Gardens. Samuel Spikenard undertook to do all that we wished, and for a few happy months no garden could be gayer than the little patch behind Elm Tree Row. Such pelargoniums, fuchsias, and verbenas—such dahlias and petunias—I never saw before nor since! It was Christmas time, and a few old friends were to dine with us. On Christmas Eve the good cheer had just come in from the grocer's, the baker's, and the butcher's—from the last a splendid sirloin, and from the greengrocer's the vegetables and trimmings—when my wife came into the room with a serious face. "George," she said, "I have scolded Turnips, the greengrocer, over and over again about his vegetables not being fresh and nice, but it is of no use. Just look what herbs he has sent! This parsley is just

like an old rag, and I might as well scrape your walking-stick as this horseradish. You know it has no flavour at all unless it is fresh, and your aunt Judith is coming to our Christmas dinner, and she is so fond of it. It is all very well, my dear, to grow flowers in the garden, but you really must let me have a corner to grow some herbs, so that we may run out and gather them fresh whenever they are wanted."

Could I do otherwise than fall in with so reasonable a suggestion? Alas! had I known what would follow, I would cheerfully have paid Turnips a sovereign for every penny bunch of parsley rather than have taken the unadvised step that I was led to do!

Before the early spring came round again Samuel Spikenard was busy at his work, turning over the ground and planting his bulbs in the anticipation of a glorious show of crocuses and tulips. I was strolling round the garden in the twilight, when the request of my wife for a herb-bed came to my recollection.

"Samuel," I said to him, "I want a few herbs grown this season, if you can find a spare corner for them. Just a little patch of parsley, and some sage and mint and thyme, and a root or two of horseradish."

"Well, sir," said Samuel, "I thinks if a gentleman means to grow flowers as he ought to grow 'em, and if he wants a market-garden, he'd better hire a market-gard'ner to tend his bit o' ground; an' I thinks, sir, as you'll do a deal better not to heve none o' that sort o' rubbish a mixin' with my flowers here, for there isn't never a square inch as I can spare 'em, and Turnips, the greengrocer, he'll sell 'em cheaper and better nor ever you'll grow 'em here, sir."

The mention of Turnips, and the recollection of the musty trimmings to the Christmas beef, determined me, when I ought to have yielded to Samuel's better knowledge.

"Samuel," said I, firmly but kindly, "I desire you will plant the herbs I have mentioned, and if you can find no room elsewhere, you must put them here and there amongst the flowers—just a few in each bed, where they will not be conspicuous."

"Well, sir," returned he, "that's not *my* way; but howsumever, if you horders it, sir, I'll do it;" and he wiped his forehead with his sleeve, and looked sulky.

"Samuel," said I, "I *order* you to follow the directions which I have given."

Next day the seeds were brought and sown (just a little bit in each bed), and neatly labelled.

"What are those things, Samuel?" I asked, observing about a dozen little whitey-brown sticks in his hand.

"These cre's orsradish," said he, "as you *hordered* me to plant; so I'm jest a stickin' one on 'em in the middle of each bed."

"Do you think one in each bed is enough, Samuel?" said I. "Try half a dozen."

"You'll find 'em sufficient, sir," replied Samuel, with a grim smile. So they were planted and labelled like the rest.

Spring came fully in, with its genial weather and its flowers; when one day my wife came to me and said: "My dear George, how provoking it is that we cannot get a bit of horseradish to grow in the garden! I have been looking at the place where Samuel stuck the label in February, and there is not the slightest sign of its coming up; I do not believe the tiresome man planted any. And did you ever see the garden so weedy before, George? There is a sort of weed like a dock-leaf coming up all over every bed, and I have pulled it up, oh so often! but there seems no end of it. It comes up in the night, I think, when one is not looking. I spoke to Samuel about it, and asked him what it was; but all his answer was, 'Ax master, mum, he orts to know, *he* orts; it's none o' *my* plantin', mum.'"

Samuel was working gloomily in the garden; he seemed to have lost his love for it. The miserable weed my wife had noticed was green on all the beds; the flowers were scanty and poor; the white stick labelled horseradish stuck up by itself in the middle of each bed. I was vexed, and, I dare say, I spoke harshly.

"Mr. Spikenard," said I, "I am afraid you have lost all pride in my garden; look how weedy it is! And you could not oblige me by raising a few plants of horseradish. I believe you never put in those roots at all!"

Samuel laid down his spade, and ran his horny fingers through his grizzled hair. He evidently took me for a lunatic, and believed that what I now said was the development of a mania that had first shown itself in February.

"Orsradish!" exclaimed he; "good lawks! orsradish! Surely yer don't mean to say as yer wants *more* on it? And look at my garden, as was so bewtiffle, overrun with it! But I won't serve no one as is gone out o' his senses on the subjeck o' orsradish! so I'll leave yer, sir; I'll leave yer service; but I'll jest dig over yer garden after the spring things is tuk up, and *then* p'raps ye'll be 'appy—with yer orsradish!"

"Samuel, you are insane!" I replied. "Look at those labels; not a single leaf near them; and *you* tell *me* that the garden is overrun with horseradish!"

"Good lawks, sir! and what do yer call *them*?" pointing as he spoke to what I had taken for dock-leaves. "Did ever a gentleman's garden look sich a sight as that before? Don't ye know, sir, as orsradish never grows straight up at wunst, but it strikes out roots as runs all round like a star?"

"Oh!" said I, somewhat mollified; "then it has really grown, and come up, after all!" And I went cheerfully to my wife to explain how matters stood, and that the coarse-looking plants, which she had

supposed to be weeds, were really fine specimens of that useful but pungent vegetable which she had so long coveted.

“My dear,” said I, “you can pull up the spare plants and leave a few to grow to maturity, and we will have roast beef and horseradish of our own growing when aunt Judith comes to see us again.”

The next week Samuel Spikenard came and took up the spring bulbs, which had ceased flowering. He was quiet and surly; but there was a malicious twinkle in his eye which I did not understand. This work completed, he began to dig over the garden for its summer show of flowers. My aunt was to dine with us the next day, and I had my reasons for keeping on good terms with her: she was wealthy, and her money helped me in my business.

Dinner-time came. My wife met me with tears in her eyes. “Oh George!” she said, “aunt Judith is here, and dinner is ready, and that tiresome, nasty Samuel has dug over the garden and cut up every single plant of horseradish into little bits, and aunt *won't* eat beef without it.”

It could not be helped. There was no time to send to Turnips, and if there had been I would not have humiliated myself to him, after having proudly told him that in future I should grow my own herbs.

So dinner was eaten, and we all were cross and out of temper over it. My aunt ate only potatoes and gravy, and refused beef shorn of her favourite garnishing. Before she left she said to me: “Oh George! I wish to invest that thousand pounds that I lent you in ‘Cheatem and Doer’ stock, and I am sorry to have to ask you to repay it to me so soon, but you must contrive to let me have it next week.” I paid her the money, but it injured my business, and, as I sat at the window, looking into my garden, now bare and desolate (for Samuel had left me, and I had not replaced him), I thought bitterly of my fancy for growing my own herbs, and what it had brought upon me.

“I think, my dear,” remarked my wife, “that I see some of the horseradish coming up again.” Yes! It *was* coming up again! It *did* come up again! Do you know how horseradish grows? Did you ever hear of the Hydra, a beast with a hundred heads, which, if one was cut off, burst out with a new crop of half a dozen? Have you read of the marvellous vitality of wheat? Of its growing, when planted, after it had been clasped for thousands of years in the hand of a mummy? Have you heard of seeds, buried in the earth for unknown ages, germinating into new forms of vegetable life, when some railway cutting exposed them to air and light? Well, they are nothing to horseradish! Cut it up into pieces, and every piece sends out a dozen shoots and offsets; bury it, and it forces its way up; cast it down on the naked soil, and it puts up a shoot to the light, and sends a root into the earth; its stringy fibres run like a mole under the ground, and come up again in unexpected places a huge bunch of pungent green;

it scatters seeds, and they grow in a season to seed and increase again. I learned all this, but too late. In another month my garden was a wilderness of coarse green! Every fragment that Samuel had dug in became a score, ay, a hundred plants. I tore them out of the walks, the beds, the borders, uprooting my trim box-edging and destroying my neat gravel-walks.

At last my wife said to me: "George, I am so sorry that you should be mortified in this manner by that dreadful horseradish. Let us get it carefully dug up, and we will have the garden sown with grass and make it into a lawn. A few nice shrubs will look nearly as well as the flowers, and we shall have no trouble with them."

So we got a man to fork up the plants as well as he could, and my garden disappeared; the roots were carefully thrown aside in a heap, and grass was sown over the place where my flowers had been so gay.

But the grass would *not* grow into a lawn. It did certainly come up here and there in patches, but, before it could grow, the broad curling leaves of my enemy began to spread over it. It was vain to cut it down; it sprang up again in a day or two; the fine threads from the roots grew quickly into cords, so that to pull it up was to destroy my lawn.

I humbled myself so far as to send for Samuel Spikenard; but all the advice he gave me was to try sodding, saying, "Them as 'ad it put in orts for to know 'ow for to get it hout." He treated me as one would do who sees a gleam of returning reason in a lunatic.

"I will have it sodded," said I to Clara; "it will make a croquet-ground." (The game had just then been invented.)

Not long after this my neighbour, old Mr. Dunlop, came to call on me. He was an old salt, and had been a captain of a ship, where he had seen some rough service. He had a mast fully rigged in his garden, and two ship's carronades, and a pile of shot menaced all those who approached his verandah. His head was bald and shining, and his strong heavy face was of the colour of mahogany. His back was broad as that of a turtle, and his legs were like pillars set wide apart. He had been a strict disciplinarian in his ship, and he now ruled his house and garden by the most rigid and inflexible laws. Not a thing was out of its place; nothing was permitted to go wrong, especially among his geraniums, pansies, and carnations, which engrossed his whole care and attention. Do you know how a man of that kind can swear when he is angry? Do you know how he can act when he is crossed? Yes; you have not been so long in the world without knowing something about it!

It was five o'clock in the morning, when I hurried down to answer his impatient rattle at my door (I am not an early riser). I dare not repeat the language he used. Clara looked out of the window, fearing he would kill me, and trembled as she listened.

"Do you know, sir—do you know that you've been and piled five tons of nasty stinking horseradish against my hedge, sir, and that it's grown through, sir, into my garden, and is smothering the carnation that I was going to send to Dogglebury Flower Show, sir? Do you think, sir, that, because you are such an idiot, sir, as to grow it yourself, sir, that I want it straying on my premises, sir? I hold you liable for all consequences, sir; and if you don't have it cleared away, sir, before the end of the week, I'll" The remainder of the sentence I cannot record here.

I stammered out my regret, and promised in a faltering voice to have it removed. Alas! how often had I tried in vain to remove it!

The next day the pile was taken to the opposite side of the garden. I tried to burn it, but it would not burn; it was growing at every joint, and was as green and moist as it could be. How bare the hedge looked where it had been, and I could see through it the long shoots that had crept into my neighbour's garden.

"I will try to pull them out," said I to myself, but my heart sank in my bosom. I knew how vain it would be to try to get rid of the plague. I carefully drew the long, ropy roots towards me. I saw them leave a long furrow in my neighbour's soil! Some of his choice flowers seem to move! I gave a stronger pull; there was a crash of glass, and I fell backwards, drawing through the hedge the prize carnation entangled with my intrusive plant; and I had pulled down also a glass frame, to the utter ruin of the remaining flowers.

From that time forth I had an enemy next door. My poor wife could no longer walk in the garden, owing to the growling and cursing of the venerable tar. Her health began to droop.

The ground had been sodded, and was kept mown, but a day or two would cover it with the noxious plant. Simpson, who used to be considered the crack croquet player, would join our little croquet parties now and then; but he complained that his eyes smarted so much on my ground that he never could make a decent stroke. The lawn had to be freshly mown for every party, and the horrid effluvia of the root filled our nostrils. Our croquet meetings were finally broken up by old Dunlop. He had treasured up his vengeance and my stray roots for a fitting opportunity; and, at our last meeting, he poured a shower of roots and leaves over the hedge, mingled with a torrent of imprecations on the fools who liked horseradish, and who should have all he had to spare.

"Let us leave this place, Clara," said I; "I can endure this no longer; we will let this house and take another."

"Oh George!" replied she; "it is just what I have been wishing for. Baby has been nearly poisoned in the garden with a piece of that dreadful stuff that he picked up; and when it bit his dear little

tongue, he rubbed his eyes with his fingers, till they are as red as fire, and, oh! so dreadfully sore! Yes; let us go!"

At last we found a young couple who were willing to take the house; the garden had been nicely mown the day they came to look at it, and they only remarked on the curious smell. "I should like some flower-beds cut out in this grass," said the bride. I held my breath, and said nothing. We soon after left for another house farther away from town. You may be sure I looked carefully to see what was growing in the garden!

But my tenants did not stay long; they said nothing could be done with the garden, and that we must have been accustomed to supply all London with horseradish.

For a long time the house was unlet. Mr. Dunlop was dead, and I visited the place occasionally. It was embedded in a forest of rough leaves.

At last I found a tenant who, I thought, would suit me exactly. "I don't care for the garden," said he. "If you'll do a little papering and whitewashing, and build me a stable for my hunters, you can pave the garden and make it into a yard, and, as the situation suits me, I will take it on a five years' lease."

You may be sure I was not long in coming to terms, and in having the stable run up and the garden nicely paved over. "And now," thought I, "that matter is settled for good." You may judge what were my feelings when Tom Tandem, my tenant, came, with a long face, into my counting-house three months afterwards, saying, "I want you to take that lease off my hands. I am not particular about terms, but I *must* be rid of the place. There is some nasty plant that grows between the paving-stones of the yard, and we cannot get it out, though half the pavement has been disturbed by pulling at it. But that is not the worst. A lot of it began to grow in the stable, and when my groom pulled it up, sir, there was a smell just like new mustard, that set my horses coughing and sneezing and kicking as if they were mad. They have smashed the stalls to pieces, and half-killed the groom into the bargain."

"Call to-morrow," said I, "and in the meantime I will think about it." But I mentally determined that I would not let my tenant off his lease if I knew it.

The next morning I received a letter and my tenant at the same moment. Having read my letter, I turned to him. "Tandem," said I, "I am glad to be able to meet your wishes, and to let you off your lease on easy terms. The 'Cheatem and Doer' Railway Company have just sent me notice that they require the property that you occupy for their new Swindlum Junction Extension, and I mean to send them word that they can have it on reasonable terms, and without giving themselves the trouble of passing it through the hands of professional valuers."

Well, the "Cheatem and Doer" took my house and demolished it. The country lane, the Elm Tree Row disappeared; a great cutting, like a half-healed scar, ran through the desolated fields, where bricks were now burned, and shabby little rows of houses, fit neither for town nor country, sprang up. Close by Elm Row Station there was a rough verdure on the bank, though all else was black cinders or gray clay. I lived some way down the new line now, and noted that last landmark of my old residence, where all else had disappeared before the ruthless tide of so-called improvement. I knew what it was, but it was no trouble to me now.

Two years after the line was opened my aunt Judith sat, as usual at Christmas time, at my table.

"Ah George!" sighed she, "I wish I had never taken that thousand pounds from you to invest in that shocking 'Cheatem and Doer' Line! Ever since they made the new Swindlum Extension they have never paid a penny of dividend, and they tell me I could not give the shares away!"

No doubt she would have run on with a long catalogue of troubles about her railway property, had not the wail of a wretched song from the hard-frozen road fallen upon our ears. Somehow the note seemed familiar to me, and I went to the window. A poor, broken-down, ragged old man was shuffling along the street. In spite of his battered hat and cracked boots, his ten days' beard, his shrunk limbs, and withered, famine-stricken face, I recognised my old gardener, Samuel Spikenard.

One feels soft-hearted at Christmas time; so, forgetting the wrong he had done me, I ran to the door and called him. "Why, Samuel," said I, "what has brought you to this?"

"Ay, sir," replied he, "*you* may well ax me that! I'm a ruined man, sir—a ruined man! Ay, deary me! To think o' my bewtiffle gardin, as I owned an' tended like a pet child!"

"And what has become of it, Samuel? Why did you part with it, when you were doing so well, and with so many new customers coming to your neighbourhood too by the Swindlum Extension?"

"'Twas that as done it, sir! Yes, yes! that done it. You know, sir, I was allus so pertickler to hev' rich, fresh soil put in every year; that was the secret of my flowers, sir; an' two year ago, sir, a contractor come to me, and, 'Samuel,' sez he, 'I've a splendid lot o' soil as 'll suit you.' 'Where does it come from?' sez I, for I was allus so pertickler to know as it should come from a right sort o' place. 'Well,' sez he, 'it's jest been dug from a stable and stable-yard, as the new line's a goin' through, an' it's as full o' likkid menure as it can be.' 'Send me ten loads,' sez I. So when the soil came, sir (my eyes isn't as good as they was, sir), there was a smell about it as reminded me o' you, sir; but, thinks I, it's the likkid menure.

So I digs it into the strawberries, an' I pots all my choice plants in it, and spreads the rest through my garden. You can guess the rest, sir, I sees by yer face. Yes, sir! So it was, sir! When I digged that ere orsradish into you, sir, I never thought as 'ow it would come back to be digged into myself; but so it was, sir. Next summer it was orsradish here, and orsradish there, and everywheres around me. I fought it till the next spring, but it beat me then, and I had to turn out. I was too old to go out gardnin', and here I am, sir, as you see."

I gave him five shillings. I confess my eye brimmed with a tear. "Samuel," said I, "you know what retribution is; but I forgive you." I have not seen him since. I know not whether the evil spirit that haunts that spot, in the form of horseradish, is laid by my forgiveness; we shall see.

But here comes my eldest son from school, and I can see "news" in his face.

"Well, my boy! What wonder have you to tell us of to-day?"

"Oh papa! have you heard of the frightful accident at Elm Row Station to-day? A poor old man tripped just at the same part of the platform that Sir Joseph Dollars fell down on, when he broke his collar-bone, for which he recovered six thousand pounds damages from the 'Cheatem and Doer' Company. The poor old man fell under the wheels of the express train, and is killed. They say there is a lot of horseradish from some old garden under that part of the platform, and that it forces up the paving tiles so that it is impossible to keep them level for a fortnight together."

"Did you hear the man's name, my boy?"

"Yes, papa; it was rather a curious one; it was Samuel Spikenard."

My wife looked at me and said, in a low voice, "My dear, you are right. The place is haunted!"



Not a Dream.

"WHAT I have got to tell you are plain facts. You can try and account for them by physical rules if you please, or you can take them as belonging to the category of things that are not to be explained. That is what *I* have done for many years. I have never told the story before, because there were those for whom it was a painful subject. They are all dead and gone now, so it doesn't matter."

So spoke the old General whom we had been teasing for a story one winter's night. Hitherto his talk had been of tigers, pig-stickings, Mahratta battles, and other Indian subjects, on which he dilated with the zest of a boy, white-headed veteran as he was. But there was something in his tone now which seemed to prepare us for a very different topic, and we were not mistaken.

I was about eight-and-twenty (he continued), and had just got my company, when it suddenly occurred to me, without rhyme or reason, that I must get leave and go home. I was in good health, and I had a promise of a valuable civil appointment. I had no one in England whom I cared particularly to see again, for I had been left an orphan very early in life, and my uncle, who was my guardian—well, let bygones be bygones. I have seen other youngsters with the same fit upon them. You might as well tell a quail that he need not migrate, as to try and persuade them not to ask for leave; and they are not worth their salt till they get it, as I have told the Directors over and over again. Well, the fit was on me, and home I went. The voyage in those days was no hop, skip, and jump over Egypt and France, but a weary business of three months—if you had good weather—in sailing ships round the Cape. I had plenty of time to think of the wonderfully pleasant things I would do when I landed, and when at last I found myself in London, I was a little disappointed. An hiatus of eleven years plays the very deuce with one's friends and acquaintance. Some people seemed to think that I must want something when I called upon them, and others were so forgetful, that I had half made up my mind to make no further attempt at renewing acquaintances, when one day, whilst taking my solitary dinner at a restaurant affected by "Indians" (we had no club of our own then), the waiter came up with a card, and, "Beg your pardon, sir," said he, "gentleman in No. 4, sir, hopes no offence, sir, but may your name be Davenport, sir?" I looked at the card; "Mr. James Stuart Cazenove" was elegantly engraved thereon. "My name," I said, "is Davenport, but—it's so confoundedly awkward, you see, for a fellow to claim acquaintance, and you not to know who the deuce he is." I

gave the waiter back the card, and the next moment its owner had taken a seat opposite me. "I should have remembered you anywhere," he said, "but you don't remember me. I took the name of Cazenove for a fortune I was lucky enough to get two years ago. I'm little Jim Stuart. Lord! don't you remember 'Cocky' Stuart at Damberley's?" Then I knew him in a moment. Cocky Stuart! the little rascal I had licked at school, whose verses I had done, and who had been my faithful accomplice in many a poaching adventure at poor old Damberley's.

Oh yes! you girls may smile. You are all very well, kissing and "dearesting" each other at two days' acquaintance, but you don't know what men feel at meeting an old schoolfellow, especially when one of them has been broiling eleven years in India.

"Cocky" Stuart was one of your lucky ones. He inherited a fine business from his father, which seemed to take care of itself. He was made a rich man's heir, and he married well in every sense of the word. He was in London to complete some business matters connected with an estate he had recently bought, and I was one of the first batch of guests who assisted at his house-warming.

"Well, old man," he said, when he had shown me over most part of the house—a huge old Tudor Gothic place which he had restored—to my thinking in great good taste—"what do you think of it?"

"I told him I liked it immensely—that he had just hit the happy mean between comfort and quaintness.

"That's just what Bessie says—it's all her doing. Bless you, I take no credit. It's all her handiwork. I wanted to pull the place down, and build a modern house, but she would not hear of it."

"And quite right too," I told him. "Why, there's many a duke would envy you those old carved oak wainscotings, those deliciously ugly corbels and stained-glass windows. There must be a legend for every stone, and I'll be bound there's a haunted room."

"Oh! that's nonsense," he replied, rather sharply.

"My dear fellow," I persisted, "a house like this would be nothing without a haunted room. If you haven't got a ghost, pray invent one. I'd just as soon be without a butler if I were you. It's quite *de rigueur* in such a dear, quaint old place, I assure you."

"Don't talk nonsense, Davenport."

I remembered afterwards how his voice and manner changed; but I did not notice it at the time. I was in a chaffing mood, and went on.

"Nonsense! Do you call ghosts nonsense?"

"Yes, I do."

"It's very wicked to call ghosts nonsense."

"Davenport, I'd trouble you to drop the subject; I don't like it."

Of course I could say no more after this, and, it being nearly time to dress for dinner, I was shown to my room.

I was somewhat surprised when I entered it. All the other rooms I had seen were, as I have hinted, quaint, old-fashioned, with low ceil-

ings, polished oak floors and wainscotings, some hung with tapestry, and all furnished in keeping with those surroundings. *My* room was a lofty apartment with a French paper on the walls, a Brussels carpet, a polished steel fire-grate, and a bed and other accessories of the latest fashion. Perhaps it was that the contrast with the other portion of the house made it appear at first harsh, vulgar, and garish. The colours on the walls and floor appeared unnecessarily gay, and two large pier-glasses with gilt frames, and a mantelpiece covered with crimson velvet, on which a handsome clock ticked loudly, flanked by two elaborate ormolu candelabra, gave it an unusual air for an English bedroom. "*This isn't Bessie's taste, I'll be bound,*" I mused, as I tied my white choker at one of the glasses. "*It's a room they have added to the old house, and Master Jim has had his wicked will with it. The rascal! If he had taken a Clapham villa he could not have done worse.*"

Bessie was a very gem of a hostess, and before dinner was over her guests, some ten in number, were on perfect good terms; and already the keels of certain small flirtations had been laid.

When the ladies had retired, and we were adjourning to the smoking-room—a rare luxury in those days—"Cocky" took me aside and whispered, "Don't you mind what I said to-day, old man. I didn't mean to be cross, you know; but don't talk about it, like a good fellow. Servants get hold of such things, and play the very deuce."

"Get hold of what things?"

"Oh! you know—about haunted rooms and that. It's all nonsense."

I was half-vexed with him for thinking I would pursue a subject which seemed to annoy him, and, lighting a cheroot, turned to a young person who had amused me greatly by lectures on India, based on information he had gained from tracts written by people as wise as himself.

At last it was bedtime, and my host accompanied me to my room, where he fidgeted about a good deal, and seemed reluctant to leave me. He set the clock right, lit a good many more lights than I could possibly want, and walked about touching small articles of furniture, putting them a little more to the right or left, backwards or forwards, in a nervous way.

"Is there anything you want?" he asked at last.

"No," I said; "nothing, thank you."

"If you do want anything, my room is the third door in the corridor to the left."

"My dear fellow, I'm an old campaigner. I shall sleep like a top in that luxurious bed," I replied.

"Well, good night. Remember the third door to the left if you want anything. Don't forget."

As I lighted him out, I noticed that there was a short passage between the door of my room and the corridor, and this confirmed my idea that the room had been added to the old house.

Directly opposite to where I had sat at dinner was hung the portrait

of a very beautiful woman, dressed as a shepherdess, with a crook in her lap and a flock of sheep in the distance. I dreamed that this picture came into my room, which suddenly became like any other room in the house, only larger. I awoke, and found the lights in the candelabra (which I had forgotten to put out) burning brightly, and everything just as it had been when my host took his departure. I fell asleep again, and was only roused by Cazenove knocking at the door, and saying that the breakfast-bell would ring in twenty minutes.

"Did you sleep well, old man?" he asked.

"Like a child," I replied, jumping out of bed.

"By Jove, I'm so glad!" he cried, with what struck me at the time as unnecessary warmth; and away he went.

When the servant came in with my shaving-water and drew the heavy curtains which hid the window, I got a little start. *It was the window of the room I had seen in my dream!* A large, deep bay-window, almost a chamber in itself, with stone copings and divisions and lancet-shaped lights, the small diamond panes in which were set in lead—a window ridiculously out of keeping with the room and its furniture. I had dressed for dinner the day before by candlelight, and seeing the incongruous window now so suddenly, brought back my almost-forgotten dream with, as it were, a mental crash which staggered me for a moment.

Angry with myself for giving way to such fancies, of course I laid the blame on some one else, and inwardly abused my host for his anachronism. "With such a window as that standing, why the deuce couldn't he have rebuilt the room in harmony with it?" I growled.

When breakfast was over, I could not help sauntering into the dining-room to have another look at the picture which had troubled my repose. The original must have been very beautiful, and as a work of art the portrait was almost perfect, except for the position of the right hand—a small white hand—but, as I thought, too prominently displayed. There was something even threatening in the attitude.

As I gazed Cazenove came in, gun in hand (it was the 1st of September), and rated me for not being ready.

I told him that I was not only ready, but had been waiting for him. "Only, before we start," I said, "tell me, who is that?" pointing to the picture.

"Oh, that? That's a portrait," he replied, becoming suddenly grave.

"So I suppose; but of whom?"

"Oh! of some one belonging to people who used to live here long ago."

"Connected with the Surface family, I should think, from their selling their ancestors?" I said. "But, I beg pardon, perhaps she was some relation of your own?"

"God forbid!"

"Well, I'm sure you have no reason to be ashamed of her personal appearance. Show me as beautiful a girl living now, and I'll show you a man who would make a fool of himself for her," I said.

"I've begged and prayed Bessie a score of times," he muttered angrily, not appearing to heed me, "to let me have the infernal thing hacked out of its panel, or painted over, or something—it's a fixture, confound it!—and she won't. I'll do it, though, in spite of her. For God's sake, Davenport, don't stand there staring like an idiot! Come and shoot, if you're coming."

This was the second time he had broken out at me rudely, for no apparent cause, and I began to think that my fortunate friend had had a bad temper left him amongst his other legacies.

At dinner he did me a grievous wrong. Contrary to all law and custom, in defiance of the British Constitution itself, he ordered me away from an exceedingly nice little girl, whom I had taken down, and sent me to the other side of the table, on the pitiful plea that there were two ladies together there. I remembered afterwards that this change brought me with my back to the picture.

The manor had been badly preserved by Cazenove's predecessor, who never lived on it, and we had a good deal of walking for our twenty brace. I was glad indeed when our fair hostess told us we were very stupid, as gentlemen always were in the shooting season, and that the best thing we could do would be to go to bed. If ever a man had an excuse for sleeping like an animal, I had one that night; but I could not sleep. I could not help thinking of the beautiful shepherdess with the small lily hand, and wondering why my host had spoken so irritably in answer to my questions about her. What did he mean by saying "God forbid!" with so much vehemence when I asked if she were a relation? Why should he want to destroy so admirable a painting?

Small things affect a man with the fidgets on him. The fire was burning brightly in its polished grate, and lighted the room so that almost every object was visible. Of all the rooms in the world, it was the last to have any such legend as I had suggested the day before connected with it. A thing of yesterday, with the smell of french-polish and new carpets not yet blown away, what association could it possibly have with a lady who probably died before Queen Anne? What story, beyond what was told in an upholsterer's bill, could belong to it? When midnight struck, and a cold shiver passed over me, I said to myself, "Davenport, my boy, you got your feet wet in the turnips. Dwellers in the tropics cannot afford to play tricks with their health. That jungle-fever you caught three years ago is not quite out of your bones. A dose of quinine for you to-morrow morning, Master Davenport." Then I shut my eyes, and manfully resolved to sleep. Small things, I say, affect a man with the fidgets on him. The fire worried

me; but what was I to do? Empty the water-jug on it?—that would rust the reflecting-bars, and bring on my head the maledictions of an injured housemaid. Take off the coals?—where was I to put them? Besides, there were no tongs, and only a sort of gigantic skewer for a poker. I am afraid I said bad words of that fire and its newfangled irons as I turned my back on it, and tried again to sleep.

At last I fell into a conscious doze, during which the light faded away; and then there came over me that pleasant sensation which says, “You have only to turn over on your other side, and you will go fast asleep.” I turned over, and saw that the old enemy of my rest was out. The room was in total darkness, save where the moonbeams fell in through the window. This struck me as odd, and roused me; for I distinctly remembered that the heavy cloth curtains were drawn close when I went to bed. “Bother the moon!” I exclaimed, and was in the act of jumping out of bed to shut it out, when another light shone suddenly from the opposite side of me, and by this I—as fully awake and in my senses as I am at this moment—saw that the size, shape, furniture, everything about the room had changed, and that it had become the room of my dream the night before!—a sombre oak-panelled room, with a high vaulted roof, in which some tattered banners waved to and fro in the night air mournfully. Even the bed, on which I sat in horror, was not what it had been, but a huge structure with gilded posts and dark heavy drapery, embroidered with quaint devices, as the state-beds of kings and queens in olden times were wont to be. Remindful of my dream, I instinctively turned towards where I fancied I had seen the picture the night before, and there sure enough I saw—not the picture, but THE ORIGINAL, standing with a lamp in one hand, and the other in the attitude of the portrait, but with this horrid difference—that the palm was pierced through and through as though by a stab, and blood trickled from it to the ground. There she stood in her fanciful dress, and a look, not of pain or of anger, but of deep unutterable despair, branding the face I had thought so innocent and beautiful, for, I suppose, some minutes, though they seemed hours to me. Then she walked slowly round the room, *close to the wall*, and vanished the instant that she returned to the spot where I had first seen her, leaving me again in darkness.

Now, I dare say there are some of you who will say that all this can be explained; and so perhaps it can, *so far*. You may argue somewhat in this wise:—“The old-fashioned part of the house had made an impression on my mind which was strengthened by the contrast presented by my bedchamber. The portrait in the dining-room had also made an impression. I had dreamed of the latter, and, naturally enough, gave it a fitting background.” So much for what you will, no doubt, call my *first* dream. You will go on to urge that, “overtired with a long day’s shooting, and with a touch of intermittent fever on me, that first dream made an impression which developed itself

into the *second*." I say again, so far such an explanation might pass. But when, impelled by terror—of which I was afterwards heartily ashamed—I knocked up Cazenove, his first words were:

"My God, Davenport! *Have you seen her?*"

Then I knew in a moment why he had answered so irritably my nonsense about haunted chambers, and the inquiries I had made about the portrait.

"I have seen some one," I replied, "and it may be a trick. Bring your lamp and come at once."

"Not for the world," he cried, drawing back. "She never appears a second time to the same person; but I have not seen her yet. You may take the light and satisfy yourself without the slightest danger. It is all over."

I went back, and found everything exactly as it had been—the thick curtains closely drawn over the window, and the fire still burning. Then I rejoined my host in the corridor.

"Don't blame me for what has passed," he said, in a low voice, "until you hear my excuses. I *have* a haunted chamber—worse luck! Look here."

As he spoke he lifted the tapestry, and disclosed a small low door, which I saw from its position should lead into the room I had just left. "Go in," he continued, opening it by pressing a spring, "and look about you. No, there is nothing to fear; I tell you again, she never appears twice to the same person. Go in, and judge for yourself if there be any trick."

I went in, and found myself in what appeared, at first, to be a passage between the corridor and my bedroom; but on examining the outer wall, I recognised it, with a cold shudder, as the wall of the room round which the lady with the bleeding hand had passed. I looked up, and there was the dark vaulted roof, there were the tattered banners. *The new room had been built inside the old one.*

The Dream theory will not do now. A dream is a confused set of ideas arising out of something which the sleeper has seen or known of when awake. I had never seen that room; it was hid from me (all but the window) by solid walls of brick. I had every reason to suppose that I was in a new part of the house. How, in a mere dream, could I *invent* such a thing as a chamber within a chamber? Again, with regard to the picture, I was half in love with the winning grace, the essentially feminine beauty, of the fair shepherdess. In a mere dream I should have made her the central figure of gay scenes, court revels, masques, balls, and the like, which, waking, I fancied she must have graced. How could I *invent* such an improbable thing as that her pretty hand should be stabbed through and through?—that she should be wandering about alone at night with that awful look of despair fixed on her face?

It was no dream.

“Of course, there’s no more sleep for either of us to-night,” said Cazenove, as I rejoined him. “Come into my dressing-room, and I will tell you all I know about this miserable business.”

I was angry with him for what I considered his unfair treatment, and had determined to tell him so; but there was something so dejected in his voice and manner, that I checked myself with the words hot on my lips, and followed him in silence to his room.

His narrative was a long and not intelligible one, for he rambled into many details which had nothing to do with the story, and wasted a good deal of time talking about his bad luck, and giving instances of it; so I had better give it to you in the shape into which I reduced it afterwards, with the help of some further information.

Amongst the cavaliers who cheered the exile of King Charles the Second was a certain Sir Hubert Dyke, a gentleman who had done things in his time on the Spanish Main which we should call by ugly names, but who was a stout soldier, a faithful subject, and—what was more to the purpose in those times—a rich one, thanks to his exploits amongst the galleons of the Don.

When he must have been nearly sixty he married a young French-woman, of whom when I say that she was very lovely I have told you the best that can be said of her.

The King got “his own again”—that is to say, he was brought back to waste other folks’ property; and Sir Hubert and Lady Dyke got their own again, considerably improved by having passed through the hands of a crop-eared knave, who, if half that is said of his conduct as a landlord be true, was worth a whole regiment of lawless dare-devils like Sir Hubert.

High festival was held in honour of the Restoration at the manor, and its beautiful lady was the life and soul of the revels, not the least splendid of which was a masque composed by Dryden, in which she appeared as a shepherdess. Amongst the company was a then unknown artist named Lely, who asked and obtained the honour of painting her portrait on a panel in the dining-room. The fame of that masque went abroad, and the King himself commanded its repetition.

But for one thing Sir Hubert would have been a happy man. Amongst my lady’s train, and the actors with her in that masque, was a young countryman of hers, who, it turned out, had wooed her before she had charmed the eye of the ex-buccaneer, and whom she loved in spite of her marriage-vows. Dark hints reached Sir Hubert’s ears, and I dare say he would have stood on scant ceremony with the disturber of his peace, but that there was the royal visit and the royal command; and, as the masque could not be performed without Monsieur le Goffe, his hateful presence had to be endured. Only one-half of the truth appears to have been known to Sir Hubert, for he is reported to have been most affectionate and courteous towards his beautiful wife up to the last.

The masque went off more brilliantly than before, and all that is known with any certainty of what followed, is that shortly after midnight a wild piercing shriek was heard, and my lady rushed to the King's chamber, calling for help and justice, and showing her hand pierced through and through by a stab. The next day the establishment was broken up. My lady is said to have returned to France, and to have entered a convent. Sir Hubert obtained a military command in Scotland, but Monsieur le Goffe *was never heard of again*. The legend goes that the lovers were surprised; that the lady threw her arms round Le Goffe to protect him from her injured husband's fury, but that he stabbed him to the heart *through her hand*.

The scandal was hushed up, as such things could be in those days, when great people were concerned; but no one could live in the state-chamber, and eventually the fine old house was sold for about a fifth of its value.

"Like a fool as I was," said Cazenove, "I made no inquiries. I saw the place and liked it; so did Bessie. I offered a sum for it which I thought ridiculously small, and to my surprise it was accepted. Not a servant belonging to the vicinity would come to live with us, and so at last the truth leaked out—the place was haunted! Bessie said it was all nonsense; that the state-chamber was far too large and sombre for a bedroom; that its dark walls, and the shadows and noises in the vaulted roof, *created* fancies: and as we could not pull it down without disfiguring the house, we built a modern room inside, which you were the first to occupy. But you see it is no use; there is a curse upon the place!"

"Has it appeared in any other part of the house?" I asked.

"No, never."

"She has appeared to many persons?"

"To every one who has slept in that room—once."

"And—tell me truly, Cazenove, what has followed?"

"Oh, it's no use talking about it any more," he replied, with a renewal of his old petulance.

"Cazenove, I insist on knowing. There is something you wish to conceal—out with it, man! The thing is done, and cannot be helped. What has followed?"

"They say that those to whom she appears never marry."

* * * * *

"And were you ever married, General?" asked a pretty girl who sat next him.

"Never, my dear," replied the old soldier; "but whether that was my fault, or the ghost's, I cannot say."

"You think it really was a ghost?"

"What am I to think?"

That is a question which has yet to be answered.

The Three Souls.

IN the year 1805, I had reached my sixth year of study in transcendental philosophy at Heidelberg. It is well known what life at a German university is like. We used to rise at noon, smoke our morning pipe, and drink two or three glasses of *Schnaps*. Then buttoning our tight-fitting jackets up to our chins, and adjusting our college caps carefully over our left ear *à la* Prussian, we would quietly stroll to the lecture-hall for half an hour, and hear the renowned Professor Hasenkopf discourse on the nature of reason and instinct—every student, however, feeling himself at liberty to yawn, or to go to sleep, if he thought fit. Lecture over, we used to find our way to our favourite hostelry, the Coup d'Or. Here we would stretch our legs comfortably under the table, while the pretty waitresses, dressed in their little black-silk jackets, ran up with plates of sausages, slices of ham, and cans of strong beer. Then we would eat and drink, sing our favourite songs from Schiller, and enjoy ourselves generally; one amusing himself with his dog—another, of a different taste, passing his arm affectionately round Charlotte's or Gretchen's waist. At this point, sometimes, fierce wrangling would arise, and soon find expression in blows. Walking-sticks would be brought into free play, and beer-cans and fragments of chops and sausages would fly about the room. Presently the watchman would arrive, and march us off to pass the night in the guardhouse. After this fashion our time passed away.

At Heidelberg you would meet the scions of dukes, barons, and princes; you would also meet the sons of cobblers, schoolmasters, and worthy tradesmen. The former made a select set of their own, but all the rest mixed cordially together.

At the time of which I write I was thirty years old; my beard was already tinged with grey, and an existence whose main business was smoking tobacco and eating sausages and sauerkraut was beginning to decline in my estimation. As to Hasenkopf, I had so long heard him discourse on ideas consequential and ideas intuitive, on logical and dogmatic truth, and so on, that his doctrines formed a complete hotch-potch in my head. I seemed to have reached the lowest depth of science, *ex nihilo nihil*, and often said to myself, "Karl—Karl! it is not well to know too much. Nature has no more illusions for thee. Thou canst say with the Hebrew king, who had wearied of everything, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!'"

Such was my despondent frame of mind, when, towards the spring of that same year 1805, a startling circumstance taught me that I

did not yet know everything, and that the philosopher's career is not always a path of roses.

Among the oldest of my fellow-students was one Heinrich Erdmann, without exception the acutest logician I ever met. His personal appearance was not prepossessing. Picture to yourself a short rough-looking man, with sunken eyes, blonde eyebrows, and red hair dashed with bronze—with hollow cheeks ornamented with a beard like a bush, and massive shoulders covered with magnificent rags. To see him glide along the street close to the wall, with a hunch of bread under his arm, his eyes gleaming, and his back bending with a marvellous suppleness, you would have taken him for an old cat in search of his belle.

But Heinrich thought of nothing but metaphysics. For five or six years he had lived in a garret over a disused slaughterhouse, subsisting entirely on bread and water. Never had a bottle of foaming beer or of Rhenish wine been suffered to damp his scientific zeal, nor a plate of ham to interfere with his transcendental studies. The poor creature made one absolutely frightened to look at him, for, in spite of his obvious state of consumption, his meagre large-boned frame still retained fearful power, the muscles of his hands and jaws stood out like bands of iron, and, together with his squinting look, made it impossible to pity him. This strange being, spite of his voluntary isolation, seemed to have a sort of liking for me. He would occasionally come to see me, and, seating himself in my armchair, would treat me to some of his metaphysical speculations.

"Karl," he used to begin, in his harsh voice, proceeding on the Socratic method of interrogation—"Karl, what is the soul?"

Proud enough to parade my learning before him, I replied, with a dogmatic air: "According to Thales, it is a kind of magnet; according to Plato, a substance which originates itself; according to Asclepiades, an activity of the senses. Anaximander considers it a mixture of earth and water; Empedocles, the blood; Hippocrates, an intelligence fused through the body; Zeno, the quintessence of the four elements; Xenocrates, the——"

"Yes—yes," said he; "but you—what do you think is the substance of the soul?"

"I, Heinrich!" I replied: "I think, with Lactance, that I know nothing about it. I am, naturally, an epicurean. Now, the epicureans believe that all knowledge must come through the senses; and as the soul does not fall within the range of my senses, I cannot form any notion of it."

"But, Karl," continued he, "observe what an immense number of living beings—insects, for instance, and fishes—there are that lack one or more of our senses. And who knows whether we ourselves possess all, or whether there are not some existing of which we have not even the faintest idea?"

"That is possible," said I; "but, being doubtful, I refrain from pronouncing upon it.

"Do you believe, Karl," he resumed, "that it is possible to know anything without having learnt it?"

"Certainly not," I replied; "all knowledge proceeds from study or experience."

"Then how does it happen that the young of the fowl no sooner leave the egg than they begin to run about in search of food? How is it that they perceive the hawk while yet in the sky, and hide themselves under their mothers' wings? Have they made the acquaintance of their enemy in the egg?"

"That is the effect of instinct, Heinrich; all animals obey the dictates of instinct."

"Then it appears that instinct consists in knowing what they have never learnt?"

"Ah!" cried I, "now you ask too much. How can I answer you?"

Smiling scornfully, he would throw the flap of his shabby cloak over his shoulder, and walk away without adding a word. I used to think him a madman, but a madman of the most harmless kind; for who would have thought that a passion for metaphysics could be dangerous?

Such was the state of affairs when Catherine Lemwig, the old *Küchlein* dealer, suddenly disappeared. This good woman used generally to turn up at the Coup d'Or towards eleven o'clock. We students were always glad to have some fun with her; she remembered some of the frolics of her youth, and made no secret of them. Indeed, she would relate them herself, and laugh till she held her sides. "Ah, mon Dieu!" she used to say, "I have not always been fifty years old; I've spent some pleasant 'quarters of an hour.' And, after all, do you suppose I repent them? Ah, if only they were to come over again!" Here she would heave a deep sigh, which made us all laugh.

About the third day after her disappearance, her absence began to be remarked.

"What the devil has become of old Catherine?" said one. "Can she be ill? Strange! Seemed so merry last time she was here."

"The police are looking for her, I hear," said another. "For myself, I had no doubt that the poor old woman had been drinking too much cherry-brandy, and had fallen in the evening into the river."

The morning after this conversation, while on my way to lecture, I met Heinrich slowly strolling along the road to the Minster. As soon as he saw me he came quickly up, his eyes sparkling with excitement. "Karl," he said, "I was looking for you—I was looking for you. The hour of triumph has come! Follow me—follow me." His look, his gestures, his pallor, betrayed extreme agitation; and as he seized my arm, and dragged me along in the direction of the tanners' quarter, I

could not help an indefinable feeling of fear, and yet had not the courage to resist.

The lane, along which we were passing with rapid strides, ran behind the Minster, through a block of houses as old as Heidelberg itself. The gabled roofs, the wooden balconies, where the common people hung out their linen; the outside staircases with their worm-eaten balustrades; the innumerable wan, emaciated, inquisitive faces, looking from the windows, and watching with a hungry look the strangers passing through their street; the long poles reaching from roof to roof, and hung with red hides; the thick smoke rising in zigzag clouds from every storey—all passed confusedly before my eyes like a scene out of the middle ages: and the very splendour of the sky, its azure cut by the strangely-shaped gables, and its rays illuminating the dilapidated walls, increased my emotion by the strangeness of the contrast. At such a time as this it is that a man loses his presence of mind; it never even occurred to me to ask where we were going. After passing through this wretched quarter, we reached a deserted district, principally composed of old slaughterhouses. Suddenly Heinrich—whose hand, dry and cold, seemed riveted to my wrist—led me into a ruined old building, situated between a disused granary and a slaughterhouse.

“Walk on,” said he.

I entered, and crossed a large half-lighted room, keeping close by the wall, which was built of mud. At the end of this was a staircase, the steps of which were worn, broken, and covered with rubbish, over which we had to pick our way. My companion, impatient of the slowness of my pace, kept exclaiming, “Higher—higher;” but finding myself in a dilapidated room, at the foot of a ladder the top of which was lost in darkness, a sudden apprehension seized me, and under the pretence of stopping to take breath, I paused to consider whether it were not better to fly. I have never since been able to explain to myself how I came to climb that ladder, for no reason whatever, in spite of a vague feeling of fear, and without asking my companion for a word of explanation. Suffice it that I did, and found myself in an enormous corn-loft, lighted by three dormer-windows; on the left the high grey wall of the gable, a small table covered with books and papers in the middle of the room—over our heads the beams of the roof. The windows being ten or twelve feet from the ground, it was impossible to look out. A large opening had been cut in the gable from the floor upwards, and a small door fixed there, but this I did not notice until afterwards. Heinrich, without uttering a word, pushed towards me an old box which he used as a chair, and refreshed himself with a deep draught of water from a pitcher in the corner.

“We are in the garret of an old slaughterhouse,” said he, with a strange laugh, as he replaced the jug on the floor. “The town council

have voted funds to build a new one outside the town. I have lived here five years without paying any rent, and not a soul has ever come to interfere with my studies." And, seating himself upon some logs of wood in the corner, he continued:—

"Ah! now we come to the point. Are you perfectly certain, Karl, that you have a soul?"

"Look here, Heinrich," I answered, not in the best possible temper; "if you have brought me here to chatter about metaphysics, let me tell you you have made a great mistake. I had just left lecture, and was on my way to the Coup d'Or when I met you. I have taken my daily dose of abstraction, you understand; that is enough for me. So let me ask you to explain yourself clearly, or leave me to find my way back to the inn."

"You only live to eat, then," said he, in a harsh tone; "do you know that for love of science I have spent whole days without a morsel of food?"

"Every one to his taste," said I: "you live on syllogisms and logic; I prefer sausages and strong beer. What would you have? I can't help it."

His face had become pale, and his lips trembled, but, conquering his anger, he said:

"Kasper, since you won't answer my question, at least listen to my explanations. A man must have some one to admire him, and I want you to admire me. I want you to be even overpowered by the discovery I have just made. That, I think, is not too much to ask—an hour of attention for ten years of conscientious study?"

"All right," said I—"go on. I'm listening. Only, make haste."

A fresh convulsion passed over his face at this, and I began to repent having climbed that ladder; but, thinking him a maniac, I assumed a sober expression, so as not to irritate him. This seemed to calm him a little, for after a pause he said:

"You are hungry? Here is my bread, and there is my pitcher; eat and drink, but listen."

"Never mind, Heinrich," said I; "I can listen very well without that."

He laughed bitterly, and continued: "Not only have we a soul—that has always been admitted; all living beings, from the plant up to man, have a soul, *because* they live. Is it necessary to study six years under Hazenkopf to know that? No. But this is what is not universally known, that the more perfect the physical organisation becomes, the more numerous become its souls. This it is that distinguishes living beings from each other. The plant has but one, the vegetable soul. Its functions are perfectly simple—viz., to drink in nutrition by means of its leaves and roots. The animal has two souls: first, the vegetable soul, whose functions are exactly similar to those of the plant, its organs being the lungs and

stomach ; and, secondly, the distinctively animal soul, which drinks in sensations, and whose organ is the heart. Now man, who sums up in himself all terrestrial life, has three souls—the vegetable and the animal, with functions similar to those of the brutes ; and the human soul, which includes the reason and the intelligence. Its organ is the brain. The nearer any animal approaches to man in its cerebral formation, the greater is its share of this third soul. Such are the dog, the elephant, or the horse. But the man of genius alone possesses it in full.”

Here Heinrich stopped, and, fixing his eyes upon me, said : “ Well, what do you say to that ? ”

“ Oh,” said I, “ it is all very well as a theory ; like any other theory, it only lacks proof.”

At this a sort of frantic joy seized Heinrich ; he left his seat with a bound, his head thrown back, his hands in the air.

“ Yes—yes,” he exclaimed, “ the proof is wanting ! That is what has tortured me for years ; that is what has caused me so much labour and suffering and privation. For I began, Karl, by making experiments on myself. Fasting forced the conviction of the truth of my sublime doctrine on me more and more, without its being possible for me to prove it conclusively. But at length it is proved ! I have the proof. You are going to hear the Three Souls manifest and proclaim themselves ! You shall hear them ! ”

After this burst of enthusiasm, which seemed so much like raving madness that I felt alarmed, he suddenly became cool, and sitting down, his elbows on the table, he resumed, pointing to the high gable-wall :

“ The proof is there, behind that wall ; I will show it you directly. But, first, it is necessary that you should follow the course of my argument. You know what was the doctrine of the ancients respecting the soul. They held the existence of four, all united in man—viz., *caro*, the body, a mixture of water and earth, which is decomposed by death ; *manes* (from *manere*, to remain), the phantom which haunts the tombs ; *umbra*, the shade, more ethereal than the *manes*, which disappears after visiting its relatives ; lastly, *spiritus*, the mind, the spirit, which rises, an ethereal substance, to the gods. This classification seemed to me just, leaving the first out of the question. In order to establish it, therefore, it became necessary to decompose the human being. Reason told me that every man, before attaining his final development, must pass through the plant and animal stage ; that Pythagoras, in short, had perceived the truth without being able to furnish proof of it. I determined myself to solve the problem. I set myself the task of extinguishing, one by one, the Three Souls in myself. To do this I had recourse to severe fasting. Unfortunately, however, the human soul had to succumb

first, in order to allow the animal soul to act freely. It thus became impossible for me to judge of myself in the animal condition, for by reducing myself to it, I lost the faculty of observation. After a host of fruitless attempts on my own body, I became convinced that there was but one way of attaining my object—to experiment on some one else. But who would lend himself to this kind of inquiry?" Heinrich paused; his lips worked convulsively, and he abruptly added: "I was obliged to have a subject at any price. I resolved to experiment *in anima vili!*"

I trembled. This man then was capable of anything.

"Do you understand?" said he.

"Perfectly. You needed a victim——"

"To decompose," he added, coolly.

"And have you found one?"

"Yes; I promised to let you hear the Three Souls. That will perhaps be difficult now, but yesterday you might have heard them, by turn, howling, roaring, beseeching, and grinding their teeth."

An icy shudder passed over me; but Heinrich, perfectly unmoved, lighted a small lamp, which he used to work by, and, going towards the opening in the gable on the left, "Look!" said he; "come and look, and then listen."

In spite of the most terrible presentiments—in spite of the internal trembling agitating me—drawn by the attraction of mystery, I leant over the low door and looked down. Presently I perceived, by the pale rays of the lamp, about fifteen feet below the level of the floor, a dark recess, with no other exit than where we were standing. I saw that it was one of the holes where butchers used to put hides from the slaughterhouse until they were ready to send to the tanner. It was empty, and for several seconds I could only see that pit full of shadows.

"Look well," said he, in a low voice; "don't you see a bundle of rags huddled up in a corner? That is old Catherine Lemwig, the dealer in little cakes, who——"

He had not time to finish his sentence, for a piercing savage cry, like the painful mewing of a cat when it is trodden on, came from the pit. A frightened creature gave a bound, and tried to climb up the wall by its talons. More dead than alive, my forehead covered with cold sweat, I started back, exclaiming: "Horrible!—horrible!"

"Did you hear her?" said Heinrich, his face lighted up with infernal triumph. "Is not that the cry of a cat? Ha!—ha!—ha! The old woman, before reaching the human condition, has formerly been a cat, or a panther. Now the beast reawakens. Oh, hunger, hunger, and above all, thirst, does wonders!"

He did not notice me, so carried away was he by his joy; a horrid exultation appeared in his look and posture and smile. The howlings

of the old woman had ceased, and the madman, replacing the lamp on the table, added, by way of commentary :

"She has fasted now four days. I got her here under the pretext of selling her a quantity of *Kirschwasser* very cheap. I made her go down into the pit, and shut her up. Drunkenness has ruined her ; she is now paying the penalty of her immoderate thirst. Ha!—ha!—ha! The first two days the human soul was in full vigour : she besought and implored me, protesting her innocence, and saying she had never done anything to me, and that I had no right over her. Then anger came on : she overwhelmed me with reproaches, denouncing me as a monster, a wretch, and so on. The third day (that was yesterday) the human soul disappeared altogether : the cat began to send out its claws, and she took to mewing and howling. Fortunately, however, we are in a district much favoured by cats and dogs, where a few more or less attracts no attention. And last night the folks of the neighbourhood must have thought there was a pitched battle of cats, for the old creature's cries were enough to make you shudder. Do you know, Karl, what will happen when the animal soul has been exhausted? The vegetable soul will have its turn ; that is the one which perishes last. It is affirmed by some, that the hair and nails of corpses continue to grow in the grave, and that a kind of lichen sprouts from the interstices of the skull—a sort of moss engendered by the juices of the brain. Finally, the vegetable soul itself vanishes. You see, Karl, the proof of the Three Souls is complete !"

His words sounded in my ears like the ravings of delirium, or the fancies of a horrid nightmare. Catherine Lemwig's cries had pierced me to the marrow ; a dizziness came into my head, and for a moment I lost consciousness. Coming to myself, I was filled with indignation. I rose, seized the madman by the throat, and dragged him towards the ladder.

"Wretch !" I cried, "who has given thee authority to lay thy sacrilegious hand upon thy like, upon the creature of God, in order to satisfy thy infamous curiosity? I will myself deliver thee up to justice !"

He was so surprised at my indignation—his conduct had seemed to himself so simple, so perfectly scientific—that at first he offered no resistance, and allowed himself to be dragged as far as the ladder without making any reply ; but there, gliding from my grasp with the agility of a wild beast, he turned upon me—his eyes gleaming, his mouth foaming—seized me by the throat with a grasp of iron, and, pinning me against the wall with one hand, opened the door of the pit with the other. Comprehending his intention, I made a desperate effort to escape ; but my adversary seemed endowed with superhuman strength, and my frantic efforts served only to exhaust myself. After a brief struggle I was hurled to the ground again, and then thrust, as

it seemed, into space. As I reached the ground, cut and bruised, after falling fifteen feet, I heard the heavy door close, whilst above me sounded these strange words:

“So perishes the rebellious body!—so triumphs the immortal spirit!”

Falling thus suddenly to the bottom of the den, and feeling myself caught like a rat in a trap, my alarm was so great that I forgot my pain, and gathered myself up without uttering a groan. “Karl,” I said to myself, with an unaccountable calmness, leaning my back against the wall,—“Karl, you must presently either devour that old woman, or be devoured by her. Make your choice. As to thinking of getting out of this den, that is only losing time. Heinrich has you in his claws, and he won’t let you slip; the walls are of stone, and the floor is of thick oak planks. No one saw you pass through the tanners’ quarter—no one knows you in the part where you are now—no one has any idea where to look for you. It’s all over, Karl, all over; your last resource is that poor Catherine Lemwig, or rather, you are the last resource of each other.” All this passed through my mind like a flash of lightning. I began to tremble like a leaf, and seeing Heinrich’s pale face at the opening, I tried, my hands clasped in terror, to beseech him, and found myself stammering in an atrocious manner; not a word would come from my lips. Seeing me thus he began to smile, and I heard him murmur:

“Poor coward! he is entreating me.”

That gave me the *coup de grâce*. I fell on my face and should have fainted, but the fear of being attacked by the old woman brought me to myself. She did not, however, move for some time yet. Heinrich’s head disappeared. I heard him cross the garret and sit by his table. At intervals I heard his dry consumptive cough. My hearing was so abnormally acute that the least noise made me quiver. I even heard the old woman yawn, and on looking in her direction, I saw for the first time her eyes glistening in the darkness. Presently I heard Heinrich descend the ladder, and I counted his steps, one by one, until the sound of them died away in the distance. Where had the wretch gone? I knew not; but during the whole of that day and the following night he never reappeared. It was not until about eight o’clock in the evening of the next day that he returned. I had not had a moment’s sleep. I no longer felt fear or rage. I felt nothing but hunger, devouring hunger—hunger that I knew would be continually increasing. I heard the noise of Heinrich’s return, and looking up saw presently, by the light on the ceiling, that he was lighting his lamp. “No doubt,” I thought, “he is coming to look at me now,” and with this expectation I prepared a touching entreaty. But soon the lamp was extinguished,—he never came! That moment was the bitterest of all that bitter time. I was cut to the heart. All the recollections of our

friendship, of our studies together, of my kindness to him in former times, came into my mind and filled my eyes with tears. I recognised the truth, that Heinrich, knowing I was not yet emaciated enough, would not deign to give me a glance; that in his eyes I was not an interesting subject, and should only be ripe for science during the three or four days between then and my death. I seemed to feel my hair slowly whitening on my head. And so it actually was; my hair was blanched in that hour. My terror continued to increase with the darkness, until I lost all feeling and swooned away.

Towards midnight I was awakened by feeling a cold hand touch me, and sprang away with horror. It was the old woman who had approached me, attracted by hunger. Her hands clutched my clothes, and at the same time her catlike cry resounded through the den. I expected a fearful struggle to ensue, but the poor creature had no strength left—it was her fifth day! The words of Heinrich recurred to me: “The animal soul once extinguished, the vegetable soul will supervene; the hair and the nails will grow into the ground, and green moss will take root in the interstices of the skull.” I pictured to myself the old woman reduced to that condition, her head covered with lichen, and myself lying beside her gradually approaching the same state. This image took such possession of me that I ceased to feel the pangs of hunger, and stood leaning against the wall, my eyes wide open, staring before me, but seeing nothing. After standing thus some time—I do not know how long—a feeble light appeared. I looked up, and there was Heinrich holding up his lamp, his pale face looking over the door into the opening. He was not smiling; he did not seem to experience joy, nor satisfaction, nor remorse—he simply *observed*. The expression on his face seemed to me to seal my doom. If he had laughed, or gloated over his revenge, I could have hoped to move him; but he looked as if no emotion respecting me were any longer possible to him. We remained thus several seconds, our eyes fixed on each other; I shivering with fear—he cold, calm, scrutinising, as if looking at an inanimate object. The insect which the naturalist impales with a needle, and examines through a microscope, would, if it could think and see the observer’s eye, experience sensations similar to mine. I could see that until I died I should fail to satisfy the wretch’s curiosity. Seeing, therefore, that entreaty would be useless, I said nothing. After having thus inspected me, the madman, pleased no doubt with the result of his observation, turned his head to look at the old woman. Mechanically I followed his look. Human language cannot describe the sight that greeted my eyes: a haggard emaciated face, an attenuated form, limbs so thin and bony that it seemed as though they must cut through the rags which covered them. Her hair, hanging in disorder all round her head, looked like a mass of dried herbage, and just discernible through it were two eyes glistening with the light of fever.

I could not endure the sight, but, hiding my face, said to myself, "And in three days I shall be like that!" When I reopened my eyes the light was gone."

"Heinrich!" I exclaimed, in despair, "there is a God above us. He sees us. He will avenge me and punish thee." After passing the night in vainly trying to devise some plan of escape, I resolved all at once to make up my mind to die, and this resolution gave me a few moments' peace. I mentally reviewed all the arguments of Hasenkopf relative to the immortality of the soul, and for the first time I found them of irresistible force. "Yes!" I exclaimed; "the passage through this world is only a time of probation; injustice, avarice, the darkest passions, govern the heart of man. The weak is oppressed by the strong, the poor by the rich. On earth virtue is nothing but a name, but after death perfect order and harmony will be restored. The Almighty sees the injustice of which I am the victim. He takes count of the sufferings I endure. He will forgive my ungoverned appetite, my immoderate love of good cheer. Before receiving me into His bosom, He has wished to purify my nature by severe fasting," &c., &c. And many more reflections of the same kind. Nevertheless, I am bound to confess to you, my dear reader, that in spite of my deep contrition, regret for the pleasant tavern and my happy comrades, for that happy existence in the midst of songs and wine, made me heave many sighs. I could hear in fancy the hissing and crackling of the frying-pan in the fireplace, the gurgling of the wine pouring from the bottles, and the clinking of the little cans; and my stomach seemed to moan like a living being, forming a kind of existence apart from my proper self, and protesting against all the philosophical arguments of Hasenkopf.

My thirst was the greatest of my sufferings, and it now became intolerable. When the daylight came in at the windows of the garret, and showed me part of the room, I was seized with an access of fury.

"That fiend is there!" I thought; "he has some bread and a jug of water—perhaps he is drinking?" Then I pictured him raising his huge jug to his lips. I seemed to see streams of water slowly passing down his throat—a delicious river flowing, flowing without cessation, until he was satisfied. Rage, indignation, and despair possessed me, and I began to run like a madman round the den, shouting, "Water!—water!—water!" In the midst of this, Heinrich's wan face appeared at the opening for the third time. Seeing him I stopped, and said:

"Heinrich! listen to me. Let me have just one drink out of your pitcher, and you shall let me die of hunger, and I wont so much as reproach you. You are too cruel," I said, "in keeping me here. As for this poor old woman, it is, as you justly said, quite right to experiment *in anima vili*. But I am a scholar, and I find your doctrine perfectly sound. I am worthy to understand you—I admire you!

Let me have just a single draught of water. What more would you do? The world has never heard of such a sublime conception as yours. It is certain that three souls do exist in man; I am convinced of it. I wish to make it known; I will be your truest disciple. Wont you let me have a single drink of water?"

He made no answer, and walked away. My anger then knew no bounds. I threw myself against the wall, bruising my limbs, and apostrophising him in the strongest terms. This, however, could not last; my strength soon abandoned me, and I fell fainting on the ground.

How long I remained there lost to consciousness I cannot tell, but I was aroused from it by a strange circumstance, the recollection of which will never be effaced from my mind. I was aroused by the plaintive howling of a dog—so piercing, so pitiful, more moving even than the moans of a human being. One could not hear it without pain. I rose up, my face bathed in tears, wondering whence these cries, so in unison with my own sufferings, proceeded. I listened intently. Judge of my surprise when I discovered that I was uttering them myself, without knowing it!

Of what happened after that I can remember nothing; all powers of memory seem to have deserted me. Certain it is that I remained in that den two days more, to the immense delight of Heinrich, whose ecstasy at witnessing a fresh proof of his doctrine was such that he could not refrain from bringing several *savants* from Heidelberg to see our condition, that he might enjoy their wonder at his discovery.

Six weeks later I awoke in my little bedroom, in the Rue de Mars, surrounded by my comrades, who cordially congratulated me on my escape from that lesson in transcendental philosophy. At my request my friend Otto Weber brought me a looking-glass; and when I saw my face, more haggard than that of Bramar's "Lazarus coming forth from the Tomb," I could not refrain from bursting into tears.

Poor Catherine Lemwig was dead.

As for myself, I had a long and critical illness, and for many years suffered from weakness of digestion; but, thanks to my good constitution—thanks, above all, to the skilful care of Dr. Ahn—I eventually recovered my former health.

I need scarcely add that justice laid its hand upon the wretched Heinrich; but instead of his being hanged, as he richly deserved, his friends succeeded, after six months of litigation, in obtaining his acquittal, on the plea of insanity. He was therefore sent to a public asylum, where visitors might hear him, long after, discoursing upon the subject of the "THREE SOULS," accusing humanity of ingratitude, and protesting that if justice were done statues would be raised to him in honour of his magnificent discovery.

Walpurga's Night.

(Translated from the German of Heinrich Zschokke.)

THE TEMPTER.

I WAS once, in the month of April, far from home, being detained by business in Prague, where, although I passed my time agreeably, I could not suppress the ardent desire that I felt to be once more in the little town where my young wife had already for seven weeks been looking forward to my return. We had never been separated for so long a time since our wedding-day. Fanny, it is true, wrote to me regularly every week; but these letters, full of expressions of love, longing, and melancholy, only added fuel to the fire, and caused me to wish Prague and St. Nepomuch eighty leagues north-east of me.

He who has an amiable wife of two-and-twenty, lovely as a Venus, with two blooming cupids gambolling round her, and is not five hundred times as much in love at the expiration of five years as he was the day before his marriage—to such a man it would be useless for me to describe my desire to return home.

In short, I joyfully thanked heaven when my business was at last despatched; and having taken leave of my few friends and acquaintances, I desired the landlord of the hotel to send me his bill, as I purposed leaving the next day.

On the morning on which I was to depart the landlord appeared, and handed me a bill, which, being much larger than I expected, I found that I had not sufficient money to discharge, and at the same time leave enough to defray my travelling expenses. I therefore decided upon getting a money-order cashed, and I searched everywhere for my pocket-book; but in vain, for it was gone! I felt quite stunned, as there were bills of exchange to the amount of more than fourteen hundred dollars in it, and that is no trifle in this world.

My turning everything that was in the room upside-down was of no avail. The pocket-book had vanished.

“Just as I expected,” thought I. “If a man enjoy his life for a moment the devil is sure to play him some trick. If he wish to avoid feeling anxiety and vexation let him never rejoice at anything. I have had proofs of that so often.”

The pocket-book was either stolen or lost. Fanny's letters were also in it, and I had had it in my hand the previous day; I was in the habit of carrying it in the breast-pocket of my greatcoat, and it appeared to me as if I had felt it there the night before when undressing. How should I be able to get back my valuable bills of

exchange? Whoever had them could at any moment turn them into gold or silver.

I began to swear, which is not a habit of mine, and I felt that if the devil roamed about as in days of yore I would without hesitation have entered into a compact with him. While thus thinking, the figure of a man dressed in a faded red-coat crossed my mind. I had seen him the previous week in a billiard-room, and he appeared to me like the devil incarnate. A cold shudder ran through my frame, and yet I was in such despair that I thought, "For my part, even were he the devil, I would welcome him if he would only procure me my pocket-book."

At that moment some one knocked at the door of my room. "Holloa!" thought I, "will the tempter turn jest into earnest?" With the disreputable-looking red-coat in my mind I ran to the door, possessed with the idea that it must be he; and behold!—wonderful to relate—when I opened the door the tempter of whom I had been thinking nodded his head slightly and entered!

A FULLER DESCRIPTION.

I MUST relate where and how I became acquainted with this apparition, in order that I may not be considered of unsound mind.

A friend once took me to a coffee-house or casino of the new town in order to play billiards, and I went there again one evening in the expectation of seeing the latest newspapers. At a small table two gentlemen were absorbed in a game of chess. Some young men sat at a window, warmly discussing apparitions and the nature of the soul. A little elderly man dressed in a scarlet frock-coat was walking up and down the room, with his hands behind his back. I took a glass of *liqueur* and a newspaper, but I soon forgot even the newspaper and the war in Spain, so much was my attention attracted by the perambulating Red-coat. His dress was tasteless, and there was something strikingly disagreeable in his figure, features, and motions. He was under the middle-size, but large-boned and broad-shouldered; his age appeared to be between fifty and sixty, and he stooped like an old man; but glossy, raven-black hair hung in smooth straight locks about his head. There was something repelling in his dark yellow face, hooked nose, and high cheek-bones; for, while all his features remained immovable, his large eyes sparkled with as much animation as the eye of an enthusiastic young man, although I could not discover in them either enthusiasm or intellect. He is, thought I, born to be an executioner, an inquisitor, a robber-chieftain, or a gipsy-king. That man could look with pleasure at a town in flames, and at children writhing on lances. I should not like to travel alone with him through a forest. I feel certain that he has never smiled since he was born.

But I was mistaken: he could smile. He listened to what the young men at the window were saying, and smiled: but heaven defend me from such a smile! It made me shudder; for every feature expressed diabolical malice, and I thought if he in the red-coat be not Satan, he must be his brother. I cast an involuntary glance at his feet, expecting to see the well-known cloven hoof; and behold! he had one human foot like every one else, and his left was a club-foot in a laced boot. But he was not lame, and he generally stepped as softly as if he were walking on egg-shells that he wished to avoid crushing. Had he exhibited himself for money he would have made even a Voltaire superstitious.

The Spanish war was now completely forgotten. I held the newspaper, it is true, before me; but I peeped over it in order to watch the extraordinary figure.

As the Red-coat passed the chess-table, one of the players said with a triumphant air to his gloomy and embarrassed opponent, "You are irretrievably ruined." The Red-coat stood still for a moment, cast a glance at the game, and said to the conqueror: "You are mistaken; in three moves you will inevitably be checkmated." The conqueror smiled haughtily; his hard-pressed opponent doubtfully shook his head, and moved; at the third move the supposed conqueror was checkmated!

Whilst the chess-players prepared to commence another game, one of the young men at the window said fiercely to the Red-coat, "You smile, sir; our discussion appears to interest you; but your smile tells me that you are of a different opinion with respect to the nature of the world and the Godhead. Have you read Schelling?"

"Yes," said the Red-coat.

"And may I ask why you smile?"

"Your Schelling," he replied, "is a subtle writer who considers the illusions of his imagination truths, because they can only be refuted by other whims of the brain which would require still greater subtilty to defend. Philosophers are in the present day just what they have ever been—blind men disputing about the theory of colours, and deaf men disputing about the merit of a musical composition. Alexander would have liked to have had a bridge made to the moon, in order that he might conquer it, and philosophers, not satisfied to remain within the bounds of reason, overstep them and become visionary."

There was an uproar when the Red-coat said this; but instead of maintaining his ground, he took up his hat, and made his escape.

I had not seen him since that day; but I did not forget the remarkable figure with the diabolical physiognomy, and I was afraid of its appearing to me in a dream.

He now stood unexpectedly in my room!

THE TEMPTATION.

"PARDON me, if I disturb you," said he. "Have I the honour to address Mr. Robert ——?"

"Yes, I am that person," I replied.

"How can you prove it?" said he.

An extraordinary question, thought I; without doubt a police-spy. A torn-up letter lay upon my table, and I showed him the address written upon the envelope.

"That may be quite right," said he; "but your name is so common that one hears it in every corner of Germany, Hungary, and Poland. Give me some more certain proof. I wish to transact some business with you, and I have been sent here."

"Pardon me, sir," said I. "I cannot attend to business just at present, as I am on the point of commencing a journey, and I have a thousand arrangements to make. You are, also, probably mistaken with respect to me, for I am neither a statesman nor a merchant."

He stared at me and said: "Is that the case?" Then, having remained silent for some time, he appeared on the point of turning round to go away, when he suddenly said to me, "But you have transacted mercantile business in Prague. Was not your brother on the point of becoming a bankrupt?"

I felt myself getting very red, for I thought that this circumstance was unknown to every human being, excepting my brother and myself. The tempter smiled maliciously.

"You are again mistaken, sir!" said I. "It is true that I have a brother, and more than one; but none of them are on the eve of bankruptcy."

"Is it so?" murmured the tempter, his features again becoming rigid.

"Sir," said I, at last, a little irritated—for it was by no means agreeable to me that any one in Prague should be acquainted with the state of my brother's affairs, and I was afraid that the cunning fellow wished to pry into mine as he had done into the plan of the chess-player in the coffee-house—"you have certainly been directed to the wrong person, and you must pardon me if I beg of you to be brief, as I have not a moment to spare."

"Have patience just for one moment," said he, "for it is necessary for me to speak to you. You appear uneasy and embarrassed. Has anything occurred which has caused you annoyance? You are a stranger here, and although I am not an inhabitant of Prague, and am now in the town for the first time these twelve years, still I can, at all events, give good advice. Confide in me. You look like an honourable man. Do you want money?"

Thereupon he smiled, or rather grinned, as if he wished to purchase my soul. His proceedings made me feel every moment more suspicious, and having by chance cast my eye upon his club-foot, superstitious fear actually took possession of me. By no means wishing to have anything to do with the questionable-looking gentleman, I said, "I do not want money; but as you are so generous as to offer it, may I inquire your name?"

"My name cannot be of much importance to you," answered he; "it has nothing to do with the affair. I am a *Mandevil*! Does the name inspire you with more confidence?"

"A man-devil!" said I, much embarrassed, and not knowing whether to consider the affair jest or earnest.

At that moment some one knocked at my door, and my landlord, entering, handed me a letter that had come from the post-office.

"Read your letter," resumed the Red-coat; "we can continue our conversation afterwards. The letter is without doubt from your charming Fanny."

I felt more embarrassed than ever.

"Have you at last discovered who I am and what I want from you?"

I was on the point of saying, "Sir, I believe that you are Satan, and that you wish to make a meal of my soul;" but I refrained from doing so.

"What is more," added he, "you are going to Eger. I leave Prague to-morrow, and I must pass through the little town. Will you accept a seat in my carriage?"

I thanked him, but said that I had already ordered a postchaise.

Upon this he became a little impatient, and said: "It is impossible to extract anything from you. When passing through the town I must become acquainted with your Fanny, and little Leopold and Augustus. Do you not yet guess who I am and what I want? Deuce take me, sir, if I do not wish to be of use to you. Do speak unreservedly."

"Well," said I, at last, "in case you are a sorcerer, I have lost my pocket-book; assist me to recover it."

"Pshaw! of what importance is a pocket-book? Can I do nothing else for you?"

"In the pocket-book, however," I replied, "there were bills of exchange to the amount of fourteen hundred dollars. Advise me what to do if it be lost, or what to do if it be stolen."

"Describe the pocket-book," said he.

"It had a light-green silk cover," said I, "with my initials embroidered upon it. It was made by my wife."

"In that case the pocket-book was of more value than the fourteen hundred dollars." He smiled at me again with his horrid facetious-

ness, and then continued: "I must consider. What will you give me if I restore to you what you have lost?"

While saying this he gave me an extraordinary and penetrating look, as if he wished to prompt me with the answer, "I shall make you a present of my soul." As I, however, remained silent and embarrassed, he put his hand into his pocket and drew out my pocket-book.

"There—you have your treasure, with the fourteen hundred dollars and everything else that it contained," said he.

I was overjoyed. "How did you get possession of it?" I exclaimed, as I examined the pocket-book, and found that nothing was missing.

"I found it," he replied, "yesterday afternoon, about four o'clock, upon the Moldau Bridge, and I put it in my pocket."

"Just at that time I walked over the bridge," said I, "and I had the pocket-book in my hand, and I put it into my pocket."

"Probably thought that you did so," said the Red-coat. "As for me, not knowing whether it had been dropped by a person on foot or on horseback, before or behind me, I remained for an hour upon the bridge, expecting to see some one looking for it; and when no one appeared I went to my hotel, and read the letters contained therein in order to discover who had lost it. I found out your name and place of abode by means of an address, and I came here yesterday evening, but you were not at home."

Good heavens! how much one may be misled by the expression of a face! I made a vow never again to judge of people by their countenances. I could have embraced my man-devil. I made him the most polite speeches, for my joy, like my previous vexation, was unbounded; but he would not allow me to thank him.

When going away, he said, "Present my compliments to your charming Fanny. I hope you will have an agreeable journey. We shall meet again."

RETURN HOME.

I NOW determined to take my departure without delay; but just as I had paid my landlord, and while my servant was walking downstairs before me with my trunk on his shoulders, my brother, on whose account I had come to Prague, suddenly made his appearance.

Departure was now out of the question. I returned with him to my room, where I heard with pleasure that his affairs, which had been in a fluctuating condition, had taken a prosperous turn. He had been indemnified for a severe loss by a fortunate speculation in sugar and cotton, and he had hurried to Prague in order to bring his affairs into order.

"I have got into port," said he; "but I have suffered so much

anxiety that I shall bid adieu to commerce. I prefer receiving less interest for my money to running the risk of being to-day worth a million, and perhaps to-morrow a fugitive beggar and defaulter. I have come, therefore, to thank you for your brotherly kindness, and to separate for ever from my partners."

I was obliged to accompany him to various houses; but, perceiving my impatience and my anxiety to return home, he some days afterwards advised me to travel back without him; and I took his advice, for it was probable that his visit to Prague would be of some weeks' duration. I got into a postchaise and hastened towards my beloved home.

The extraordinary man-devil often occurred to my mind during the journey; for I could not forget his red-coat, club-foot, and sinister countenance. I recollected that a tuft of black hair rose straight up from his forehead; perhaps underneath it he had a small horn, and then he would be Beelzebub from head to foot.

It is true he had brought me my pocket-book; no one could be more honest. He had read Fanny's letters and the written instructions given me by my brother, and thereby became acquainted with my secrets. But, then, his countenance—no, nature does not usually write illegibly. In short, if I had ever had any belief in the existence of a Mephistopheles, I should now not have doubted it for a moment.

I do not deny that I encouraged these thoughts, and that I gave the reins to my imagination in order to banish *ennui*. Supposing this man-devil were really Satan, his honesty an artifice made use of to draw my soul from heaven, what had he to offer me? Gold?—I was never avaricious. A throne?—Yes, I should have liked to possess that for a week, with the power of giving peace to the world; but then I should have liked to return to my humble dwelling, and, like a second Cincinnatus, have cultivated my fields. Pretty women? A harem full of Helens, Armedas, and Amandas?—No; compared with Fanny the most lovely Circassian would appear a hag to me. I would not have given a straw to be Doctor Faust. And why? Because I was happy! Happy? No, not quite; for exactly because I was so very happy, I was afraid that death, the skeleton with the accursed scythe, might mow down Fanny, my two sons, and myself; and then the important question was, would we meet again in Paradise? I should have liked to be able to take a peep into futurity, in order to set my mind at rest. But supposing my devil were able to gratify my pious wish, and that he were to allow me to peep through a crevice in the gate of heaven, what could a subject of Adramelech be able to show me, excepting his hell?

But a truce to this nonsense.

I was two days and a night travelling from Prague to Eger, and the second day, being late on the road, I in vain urged the postilion

with bribes and entreaties to hurry on ; it became later and darker, and I became every moment more anxious to be at home. I had not seen Fanny for nearly three months, nor my children, who with their young mother looked like two cherubs fluttering about one of Raphael's Madonnas !

Yet I had been in love before I became acquainted with Fanny. For me there had once been a Julia, who was snatched from me by her haughty parents and bestowed upon a rich Polish nobleman. It was a first-love on both sides, and bordered on idolatry. When parting for the last time, we made vows of eternal love, and kisses and tears sealed the compact. But every one knows how such affairs end. She became the wife of the Polish nobleman, and I met Fanny, who inspired me with a purer and more tender affection. Julia had been the goddess of my imagination—Fanny the adored of my heart.

The clock of the little town in which I resided struck one as I drove through the silent streets. I got out of the carriage, and intending, in case that all were asleep at home, to return to the inn, I left my servant and luggage there, and walked towards the suburb at the end of which, while still at a distance from it, I saw my cheerful house shaded by high walnut-trees, and with the moonlight glittering on the windows.

HATEFUL VISITOR.

AND all were asleep !—Oh, Fanny, Fanny, had you been awake, from how much misery and terror I should have been saved ! I wandered ten times round the house, but no light was visible, and I found all the doors locked. My wife and children slept, and I did not like to waken them, because I thought that we should enjoy the rapture of meeting much more in the morning than in the feverish midnight hour.

I fortunately found my pretty newly-built garden-house open, and I entered it. The moonbeams fell upon the table where stood my Fanny's work-basket, and on the floor there were scattered the rocking-horse, drums, and whips of my children ; they had probably passed the afternoon there, and I felt, when looking at these trifles, as if my darlings were with me.

I lay down on the sofa, with the intention of passing the night there. The air was warm and balmy, and the perfume of blossoming trees and garden-flowers pervaded the room.

He who has not slept for forty hours finds every couch soft, and, overpowered by fatigue, I soon fell asleep ; but scarcely had I closed my eyes when I was aroused by the creaking of the door of the garden-house. Seeing a man enter, I imagined that he was a thief, and instantly stood up ; but, to my amazement, I found that it was my red-coated acquaintance.

"Whence do you come?" I inquired.

"From Prague—and I leave in half an hour," he replied; "and, according to my promise, I have come to see you and your Fanny. I heard from your servant that you had just arrived, and I expected to find everyone in your house awake. You will bring on a fit of illness if you remain all night in this damp place."

I trembled from head to foot as I walked out into the garden with him, so much had his unexpected appearance startled me. I was aware of the absurdity of my superstitious fear, but I could not divest myself of it. Such is human nature. By the deceptive light of the moon, the harsh features of my Prague acquaintance looked frightful, and his eyes sparkled more than ever.

"A ghost would not have startled me more," said I; "I am trembling from head to foot. What led you to suppose that you would find me in the garden-house? You appear to be omniscient."

He grinned maliciously, and said, "Do you know me now, and what I expect from you?"

"Really I do not know you better now than I did in Prague," I replied; "but, as a jest, I shall tell you the impression that you made upon me in Prague. You must not be offended. I thought that, if you were not a sorcerer, you must be the devil himself!"

He again grinned, and said, "Supposing I were the latter, would you enter into a compact with me?"

"You would have to offer me a great deal before you could induce me to do so," I replied; "for, verily, your satanic majesty—permit me, in jest, to address you so—I am perfectly happy."

"Oh! I would neither offer nor give you anything," said he. "That was probably the custom in days of yore, when men believed that there was a devil, and everyone was consequently on his guard. Then it was necessary to make stipulations. But in the present day, when no one believes in him, and people profess to act always according to the dictates of reason, they can be purchased very cheaply."

"I trust that that is not my case," said I, "although I do consider Beelzebub a fabulous personage, and think that a drachm of reason is more conducive to virtue than a hundredweight of faith in his satanic majesty."

"That is exactly what I say. The presumptuous security of mortals! Permit me to speak in the character which you have allotted to me. Your presumptuous security sends more recruits to hell than a legion of recruiting-officers in Satan's uniform. Since you have begun to consider eternity a problem, hell an Eastern tale: since you have pronounced honesty and stupidity to be virtues equal in value; selfishness, enlargement of the mind; concern for the public weal, folly; and arrant knavery, prudence—no one in hell takes any trouble to

ensnare you ; you come of yourselves. You have reason on your lips, and a hundred passions in your hearts. The most sanctified amongst you falls as soon as an opportunity to commit sin presents itself."

"That is really a devilish speech !" I exclaimed.

"Certainly," replied the red gentleman, grinning again ; "but I speak the truth because you no longer do so. As long as truth was held sacred by mankind, Satan was the father of lies. Now the tables are turned. We poor devils are always the antipodes of mankind."

"On this point, at least," said I, "we are not opponents, for I am of your opinion, my philosophical devil."

"Is it so ?" said he ; "then you already belong to me, for give me an inch and I take an ell. And—it is cold here—the horses are probably put to my carriage, and I must depart. Farewell !"

I accompanied him to the inn, where the horses for his carriage were already being harnessed. At the door he said, "I ordered some punch before I went to you ; I think you might as well come into the house and drink a parting cup with me."

I accepted the invitation, for it was very agreeable to go into a warm room.

THE TEMPTATION.

WHEN we entered the room, we found the punch already on the table. A traveller, a tall thin old man, who looked sullen and weary, was walking up and down the room. There was luggage on the chairs, and I also saw a woman's bonnet, gloves, and shawl.

Whilst we were drinking the punch, the stranger said to the hostler, who came into the room to carry away the luggage, "Tell my wife, when she returns, that I have gone to bed, as we shall have to leave so early in the morning."

Not liking to return to the cold garden-house, I ordered a bed. The traveller left the room, and we remained chatting on various subjects while emptying the punch-bowl, the contents of which had completely warmed and refreshed me. The Red-coat then hurried to his carriage, and as I assisted him to get into it, he said, "We shall meet again." The carriage then rolled away.

When I returned to the coffee-room I saw a lady preparing to carry away the shawl, bonnet, and gloves, and as she turned towards me, I lost almost all self-command ; for it was Julia, my first love, who was on the point, as I afterwards heard, of going to Italy with her husband. She was not less startled than I was, and instantly exclaimed—

"Good heavens ! Is it an apparition ? Robert !"

"Julia !" stammered I, this unexpected meeting causing a return of all the rapture of my first love. I endeavoured to address her with cold politeness, but her eyes were full of tears, her arms extended towards me, and the next instant she was clasped to my heart.

When our emotion had in some degree subsided, she sat down on the sofa, and said, "Come, Robert, we have a great deal to say to each other, and we have now an opportunity of speaking unreservedly." I sat down beside her, and how we did talk! Julia, who was not happy with her Polish husband, still loved me devotedly: she was more formed and more beautiful than ever, and she said that I had also grown handsomer.

There was an indescribable charm in Julia's manner and conversation, and I became again the slave of a passion which I had long supposed to be extinct. We lived the past over again; spoke of our first meeting at her sister's wedding—of our feeling on that occasion; then of our subsequent meeting in the Grand Duke's palace-garden; then of the boating-party with our parents; and of our having reciprocally confessed our love and plighted our troth in the Wörlitz Elysium. Then——But enough—for us there was only the past, but no future.

Suddenly the door was opened, and the tall thin man entered, saying, "Who have you with you, Julia, at so very late an hour?"

We were so startled that we were on our feet in an instant. When the Starost saw me he stood for some time speechless and deadly pale; then with three strides he rushed upon Julia, wound her long auburn tresses round his hand, and dashing the unhappy woman on the floor, he dragged her about exclaiming, "Worthless, faithless wretch!"

When I hurried to her assistance, he pushed me away with such violence that I fell backwards on the ground, and when I got upon my feet again, he left the unhappy Julia, and shouted to me, "I shall strangle you." In a fit of desperation I took a knife from the table, and threatened to stab him if he were not instantly silent, notwithstanding which the furious man threw himself upon me, and clasping his hands round my throat, he squeezed it with all his strength. Gasping for breath, I flourished the knife in every direction, and had made repeated thrusts at him, when suddenly the unfortunate man fell backwards: the knife was in his heart.

Julia lay sobbing beside her murdered husband, and I stood there like a statue. "Oh!" thought I, "if it were only a dream, and that I could waken, and find myself on the sofa in the garden-house! May the Red-coat and the pocket-book be accursed! Oh, my poor children!—my beloved, unfortunate Fanny! From the threshold of my domestic paradise, behold me dashed into a hell of which I had no conception—I am a murderer!"

The noise had aroused the inhabitants of the house. I heard footsteps, inquiries, and exclamations. Nothing remained for me but to fly before my crime was discovered, and I seized the candle in order to have light while finding my way out of the house.

CLIMAX OF HORROR.

As I descended the stairs I determined to hurry home, awaken my wife and children, press them once more to my heart, and then, like another Cain, fly in order to avoid falling into the hands of justice. But even on the stairs I observed that my clothes were covered with the Starost's blood, and the idea of any one seeing me made me tremble. The hall-door was locked, and as I hurried back, in order to make my escape by the yard, I heard men shouting, hallooing, and rushing downstairs. I ran across the yard into the barn, as I knew that I could get through it into the garden, and thence into the fields outside the town; but scarcely had I reached it, when my pursuers overtook me, and one of them seized me by the tail of my coat. By making a desperate effort, I extricated myself, and I dashed the candle into a large heap of straw that was beside me, hoping thereby to save myself: I succeeded in doing so, for the straw was in flames in a moment, and the men who were pursuing me gave up the chase in order to extinguish the fire, which enabled me to make my escape into the open air.

I dashed blindly forward, jumping over hedges and across ditches; for as to seeing my Fanny and my children again, that was out of the question. The instinct of self-preservation overpowered all feelings of natural affection. When I thought of my arrival the preceding evening, of my joyful anticipation of the approaching morning, I could not believe in the reality of all that occurred; but the stains of blood upon my clothes, and the cold morning air that chilled me, were positive proofs. I ran on almost breathless, until I could run no longer. If I had had a dagger, or had there been a river in the neighbourhood, I would have terminated my existence.

Overheated, breathless, exhausted, and with trembling limbs, I continued my flight; but more slowly, for I felt several times so faint that I was obliged to stop in order to regain my strength.

In this state I arrived at the village which was nearest to our town, and as I stood considering whether I should go round it, or boldly walk through it, as there was still bright moonlight, the church-bell began to toll. Soon the bells of other places tingled in my ears. They were alarm-bells, and the peals seemed to go through me. I looked round. Oh, heavens! behind me a wide-spread dark-red glare—an enormous pillar of flame flaring up to the clouds! The whole town was on fire. I—I was the incendiary! Oh, my Fanny!—oh, my children!—how fearfully has your father aroused you from your peaceful slumbers!

Then suddenly I felt as if I were seized by the hair, and lifted up; my feet appeared to have wings, and I bounded swiftly round the village, and towards a pine-forest. The flames of my home illuminated

every object, and the clanging alarm-bells lacerated my already shattered nerves.

When I had reached the darkest part of the forest, and could no longer see the red glare of the conflagration, in which hitherto my shadow had danced before me, I could go no farther. I fell upon the damp earth, and gave vent to my anguish by dashing my head against the ground, and tearing up the grass by the roots. I wished to die, but I could not.

Inconstant husband, murderer, incendiary!—all that in almost the same hour. The Red-coat was right: those only are saints to whom the opportunity to commit sin has not presented itself. Give the devil an inch and he will take an ell. What unlucky fatality brought Satan into the garden-house! If I had not drank his punch I might have seen Julia without forgetting Fanny; if I had been able to do so, the Pole would not have been murdered—I would not have set fire to my home—I would not lie here abhorred by myself and execrated by mankind.

The increasing peals of the alarm-bells made me jump up. I rejoiced that it was not yet daylight, and that I might hope to be able to proceed for some time without being recognised; but I again threw myself upon the ground in a flood of tears, when I remembered that it was the 1st of May—my Fanny's birthday. What happy beings we had been hitherto when celebrating it in our own circle! and now what a day—what a night! Just then it flashed across my mind that it was Walpurga's night! It is extraordinary that superstition has made this night from time immemorial a night of terror in which wicked spirits are said to have their revels, and the devil assembles his witches on the summit of the Blocksberg. I was almost tempted to believe in the truth of any enormities, and the suspicious-looking Red-coat and his extraordinary speeches occurred to my mind. Now—why should I deny it?—now I would have bartered my soul for the certainty that he was really that which he had jestingly called himself in the garden-house, in order that he might banish all recollections from my mind—that he might save me, and restore to me my wife and children in some corner of the world where we could live undiscovered. But the alarm-bells rang louder—I perceived the dawn of day—and, starting to my feet, I continued my flight through the forest until I reached the highroad.

CAIN.

HERE I stopped to recover breath—all that had happened was so sudden and so horrible. I could not believe in the reality of it. I looked behind me, and saw through the pine-trees the red reflection of the conflagration. I touched myself, and soiled my fingers with the

blood of the murdered man. "That will betray you to the first person who sees you," thought I, tearing off the stained clothes and hiding them in the bushes. I then cleaned my hands in the dewy grass, and ran thus half-undressed through the forest. "What are you doing?" said I to myself; "whoever sees you will pursue you. Only madmen or murderers run through a forest half-undressed. I must say that I have been robbed; or should I meet a peasant that I can overcome, I shall insist upon his giving me his blouse, as that would disguise me just at first. During the day I can conceal myself in the depth of the forest, and continue my flight at night. But where can I obtain food? how shall I procure money?"—for I just then recollected that I had left my pocket-book in the coat which I had thrown away, and had thereby left myself penniless.

I stood still undecided what to do. For a moment I thought of returning to search for my pocket-book; but—the blood of the murdered Pole! not for millions would I have run the chance of seeing it again. And on my way back to have constantly before my eyes the flickering of the flames between the pine-trees—No, the flames of hell were preferable!

While wandering on, I heard the sound of carriage-wheels—perhaps a fire-engine and peasants hastening to give assistance, thought I, trembling like an aspen-leaf, and springing hastily into the thicket, from which I could see the road.

A nice-looking open carriage, with trunks strapped behind it and drawn by a pair of horses, came slowly along and stopped exactly opposite me; the man who was in it, and who drove, got out, and having gone round the carriage as if searching for something that he had dropped, he walked back in the direction he had come, and a turn in the road soon hid him from my sight.

"Were you seated in the carriage you would be extricated from your difficulties!" whispered a voice within me. "Your limbs bend under you; they can drag you no further. You would be saved. Clothes, money, means of escape, are all within your reach. Heaven has taken compassion upon you. Take the hint. The carriage is empty, spring into it."

No sooner thought than done, for there was no time for deliberation. Every one for himself; a man saves himself the best way he can. Despair and necessity have no laws. One bound, and I was out of the thicket and on the road, and from the road into the carriage. I seized the reins, and turned the carriage and horses away from my burning home; but at the moment that I commenced using the whip the owner of the carriage returned and tried to catch the reins. I had gone too far to recede: while he was standing before the horses, I lashed them more violently, thereby causing them to rear and spring forward; and as the man fell under their feet, I drove over him. He

shrieked for assistance, and his voice pierced my heart. It was a well-known, a beloved voice. I could not believe my ears. I stopped, and leaned out of the carriage to look at the unfortunate man. I saw him!—but—I shudder while I tell it—I saw my brother, who, having either unexpectedly despatched his business in Prague, or for some other reason, was on his way home.

I sat there thunderstruck, paralysed, benumbed; beneath me groaned the injured man. I had not wished, I had not intended this. I dragged myself slowly out of the carriage and sank on the ground beside my beloved brother. The wheel had passed over his chest. In a low quivering voice I uttered his name. He did not hear me; he did not know me; his sufferings had terminated. I was the accursed being who had deprived him of a life that was dearer to me than my own. How terrible! two murders in one night! both, certainly, unintentional; both committed in fits of desperation; but both crimes had been perpetrated in consequence of my first dereliction from duty.

My eyes filled with tears; but they were not tears of regret for my beloved brother; they were wrung from me by insane fury against my fate and against heaven. I had never in the course of my life sullied my name by committing any great crime. I admired everything that was beautiful, good, great, and true. Nothing gave me more pleasure than to make others happy; and now, an accursed levity, a momentary loss of self-control, and that cruel concurrence of circumstances, had made me the most miserable outcast on the face of the earth.

REPENTANCE.

WHILE kissing my brother's pale forehead, the sound of voices in the forest caused me to start up in terror. Ought I to allow myself to be found beside the corpse of the beloved being that I had first endeavoured to rob, and then murdered? thought I. Without waiting to deliberate, I rushed back into the densest part of the thicket, leaving horses and carriage to their fate. The all-powerful impulse to preserve my life alone remained active in me; all other feelings lay dormant. Half-stupefied, I made my way through bush and briar; where the thicket was darkest, the branches most entangled, there I directed my steps. "Whoever finds you will kill you," said a voice within me. "Cain!—fratricide!"

At length, completely exhausted, I sat down on a large stone in the depth of the forest, and I then first observed that the sun had risen. The terrible Walpurga's night and my crimes belonged to the past; but the consequences thereof haunted my path like demons. I saw my weeping Fanny with her orphan children; I saw my brother's

inconsolable family ; I saw the procession—the place of execution—the scaffold !

My life suddenly became a burthen to me. Why did I not allow the Pole to strangle me, thought I, for I deserved it ? I had been inconstant to my Fanny, to whom I had a thousand times sworn fidelity. Or had I turned back when I saw the town on fire, I might once more have embraced my wife and children, and having taken leave of them, have rushed into the flames. By that means I would have escaped becoming a fratricide.

I was afraid to live, for every step I took appeared to lead inevitably to new crimes. My nerves were so shaken by the foregoing occurrences that I imagined that every breath drawn by a criminal was fraught with crime. I thought of committing suicide ; but having no weapon I resolved to give myself up to justice, to acknowledge with contrition my crimes, and then—under melancholy circumstances certainly—I might hope, at least once more in this world, to press to my heart my Fanny and my children, to implore them to forgive me, and, bedewed by their tears, pass into eternity. I should also be able to arrange my affairs, and give Fanny much useful advice and information.

This idea gave me some satisfaction, and I became calmer. I had renounced life, and conscience, having attained its end, ceased to torture me.

I stood up, and walked on I knew not whither, for in my confusion and terror I forgot the direction in which I had come. The forest was gloomy and the trees close to one another, and I longed to see the glare of the conflagration which was to guide me to my judges ; but it mattered little, for every way, every step, must conduct me to them in the end.

When I had walked some distance I came to an opening in the forest, and then upon an old road, along which I wandered, indifferent as to where it might lead.

THE TEMPTER.

I WAS startled by hearing a horse neigh not far from me, and love of life again becoming awakened in me, I thought of flying back into the forest. You have erred ; you are, it is true, a dreadful criminal, but if you can only save yourself this time you may yet be happy ; for although you have been imprudent to the greatest degree you are not a consummate villain. So thought I, forgetful of all my resolutions, and already in imagination in some distant solitude, where, unknown to the world, I could, under a feigned name, pass the remainder of my days with my wife and children.

While my thoughts were thus occupied, I had continued to advance,

and at a turn of the road I saw just before me a pair of horses, an overturned carriage with a broken wheel, and—to my dismay or delight, I knew not which—standing beside it, the well-known Red-coat.

When he saw me he grinned as usual, and said, "Did I not say that we should meet again? I have been waiting here the whole night; for my postilion went back to the town for assistance, and he has not yet returned."

"His assistance is more required there than here," said I, "for the whole town is on fire."

"So I thought," said he, "for I observed the redness of the sky; but what brought you into the forest? Why do not you assist to extinguish the flames?"

"I have other flames to extinguish," I replied.

"So I thought. Did I not predict it?"

"Save me," I exclaimed; "I am a terrible criminal! I have been an inconstant husband, murderer, incendiary, robber, fratricide—all since the moment we parted, all within the space of three hours! And yet I swear that I am not naturally wicked."

As I said this the Red-coat stamped on the ground with his club-foot as if he were indignant; but his countenance remained rigid and immovable, and he made no reply. I then related to him the unexampled misfortunes of the night; but he still remained unmoved.

"Do you know me now," said he, "and what I want from you?"

"My soul—my soul!" I exclaimed; "for I now begin to believe that my supposition with respect to you when I was in Prague was correct."

"And who did you suppose that I was?" he inquired.

"Satan," I replied.

"Then fall down and worship me," roared he, in a terrific voice.

Like a madman I threw myself upon my knees before him, and raising my clasped hands, I exclaimed, "Save me! save my wife and children from ruin, for they are innocent! Place us in a desert, and give us only a cave and bread-and-water, and we shall be as happy as if we were in paradise; but obliterate from my mind all recollection of Walpurga's night, or paradise itself would be a hell! Should you be unable to do this, it would be better for me to die penitently upon the scaffold."

As I said this he looked contemptuously at me, and raising his club-foot he kicked me until I fell backwards at full length on the ground. I got up, and was preparing to renew my supplication, when he interrupted me by saying, "Behold the pious, tender-hearted man! Behold the mortal, proud of his reason! Behold the philosopher, who denies the devil and expresses learned doubts with respect to eternity; he crowns his villany by worshipping Satan!"

"By what you have said alone I would recognise you, Satan," I

exclaimed, furiously ; “ for the feelings of compassion which can generally be excited in the human breast, are not to be found in yours. I want no compassion from one who is only capable of feeling malicious scorn. I wished to have purchased your assistance, and would even have given my soul for it ; but it may escape you when you think yourself most certain of getting possession of it. I may amend and obtain pardon.”

“ Sir,” said he, gloomily, “ I am not, as you imagine, the devil ; I am a human being like yourself. You were a criminal, now you are a madman ; but he who gives up his faith will not long retain his reason. I despise you, and could I assist you I positively would not feel any inclination to do so. I do not demand your soul ; it is already so ripe for hell that Satan need not offer a farthing for it.”

HOPE.

DOUBTFUL and embarrassed I stood for a moment before him. Shame and rage, repentance, and a determination to commit any crime that would save me for the present, struggled within me for the mastery. I cannot describe what passed through my mind—for the history of that brief moment would, if written by me, almost fill a book, and even then I should not be able to give an intelligible account of it.

“ If you be not he for whom I took you,” said I at last, “ I can only wish that I had been right in my conjecture. Save me—otherwise I am lost ! Save me, for you alone are to blame for the terrible misfortunes that have befallen me !”

“ Such is man !” said he, grinning. “ He professes to be pure, even when stained with a brother’s blood.”

“ Yes, sir,” said I, “ you were the cause of all the indescribable horrors of this night. Why did you come to my garden-house, where, waiting for the dawn of day, I was sleeping peacefully and innocently ? If you had not awakened me the events of this night would not have taken place.”

“ But,” he inquired, “ did my awakening you cause you to forget your wife and become an incendiary ? Such is man !—when he has assassinated thousands, he would like to throw the blame upon the miner who brought the iron from the depth of the earth ! You might as well, sir, lay the blame upon your drawing your breath ; for if you did not breathe you would be incapable of committing crimes, but you cannot live unless you breathe.”

“ Why,” inquired I, “ did you act the part of the devil when in the garden, and tell me, so significantly, that if you give the devil an inch he will take an ell ?”

“ Well !” he replied, “ was I not right ? Who could more fearfully

testify to the truth of my remark than yourself? Did I demand the inch, or did you offer it to me? But, sir, when you saw your first-love, Julia, you could not have forgotten your Fanny. You trusted too much to your virtue, or rather you did not think of it at all. Religion and virtue ought to have prompted you to fly back to the garden-house. When a temptation presents itself a man should beware of yielding to it in the slightest degree, for the first inconsiderate thought that passes through the mind is the inch in the devil's claw."

"You are right," I said; "but could I have foreseen all that would happen?"

"Certainly," he replied.

"It was impossible. Think of the frightful concurrence of circumstances."

"You ought," said he, "to have taken that as a possibility into consideration. Ought you not to have thought of the Starost when you met and embraced his wife?—of a conflagration, when you dashed the candle into the straw?—of fratricide, when you drove the horses against their owner's breast?—for it mattered not who it was, as every man is your brother."

"It may be so," I replied; "but do not drive me to desperation. You must at least allow that the first error would not have been followed by so many horrors, had it not been for such a frightful concurrence of circumstances?"

"You mistake! Was there anything fearful in the Starost going into the room to speak to his wife? Was there anything fearful in the barn being filled with straw like other barns? Was there anything fearful in your unfortunate brother being on his way home? No, sir; had you acted conscientiously, what you call a fearful might have proved an agreeable concurrence of circumstances. The world is good, the mind alone turns it into a hell. Men make daggers and poisons out of substances which might be turned into ploughshares and healing medicines. Do not attempt to justify yourself."

I now became fully aware of my iniquity, and, uttering a cry of anguish, I exclaimed: "Until this night I was innocent; a good father, a faithful husband, my character was irreproachable; now I am bereft of hope, peace of mind, and honour."

"I must contradict you, sir," said he; "you did not this night become what you are, you have long been the same. An angel does not change into a devil in the space of an hour if he be not previously possessed of devilish propensities. Opportunity alone is required to show what is in a man. You only required to meet Julia. Although you see no fire in flint and steel, strike them together and sparks will appear: one of these sparks falling into a barrel of gunpowder may be the means of blowing-up half a town. Let no one eulogise those pious

people, who, proud of their innocence, accompany the condemned criminal to the gallows; that many of them do not hang upon it themselves is a mere chance."

"That is a consolation to me," said I, "for if you speak the truth the whole world is not better than I am."

"No, sir," he continued, "you are again mistaken. I allow that you may be right with respect to half the world, but not the whole. I still believe in the reality of virtue and magnanimity, although you, with all your imaginary magnanimity, have doubts on the subject. But with respect to half the world you may be right, especially in the present day, when the ruling passions of the mind are selfishness and cowardly hypocrisy, as in your case; and therefore do you stand here condemned."

"You may be right," said I, "but I am neither better nor worse than other men of the present day."

"The world," he continued, "appears to you to be what you are yourself. Instead of seeing others reflected in ourselves, we see the reflection of ourselves in other people, as it were in a mirror."

"For heaven's sake!" exclaimed I, distractedly, "save me, for time is passing away. If I have been wicked, may I not reform?"

"Certainly," he replied. "Necessity gives strength."

"Save me!—save my wife and children! I can and will reform, now that I perceive with horror that I am capable of committing crimes of which I thought myself incapable."

"That may be," said he; "but you are a weak man, and our most atrocious deeds proceed from weakness. I shall save you, if you be capable of saving yourself. Do you know me now, and what I expect from you?"

"You are my guardian angel."

"I did not go to the garden-house previous to the commission of these crimes without a purpose. I warned you. Do not, however, be disheartened; he who has faith in the Almighty and courage has all that is necessary."

DELIVERANCE.

As the Red-coat pronounced these words his fiery-coloured dress seemed to burst into bright flames, and it appeared as if green rays darted up from the ground; it was, however, only the trees. The colours ran one into another in an extraordinary manner before my eyes; but at length I saw them no longer, for I became insensible, and lay in a swoon.

Then I felt consciousness slowly returning. I heard a sound as if from afar, and a twilight of varying rays played before my eyes. As sound, light, and my ideas became clearer, I reflected upon my condition, but I could not discover what had happened to me.

"It is either a swoon, madness, or death," thought I. "Is the soul

about to separate from the nerves, the spirit from the soul? What remains then? With the senses the universe disappears, and the spirit, not being an independent power, becomes again a part of that from which it emanated. Were this the case man would be a bubble thrown up on the agitated, ever-varying surface of the ocean of the universe; reflecting the green islands and the boundless extent of the sky; and the islands and the sky disappear with the bubble that returns to the universe." "No, no," said a voice within me; "you became a criminal because, instead of putting your trust in the Almighty, you abandoned yourself to a narrow sophistry. The spiritual world is no dead sea, and the spirit of man no bubble."

I was thinking much in this way, when I opened my eyes and saw the old man, as if supported by clouds, hovering over me with kind solicitude. I no longer saw the harsh stoical features. His transfigured countenance gave me the idea of a benign being; but the radiance dazzled me so much that I closed my eyes again and continued to dream. I could not move even my finger.

"What has, or what is about to happen to me?" thought I; for it appeared to me as if I heard the noisy bustle of towns and villages, sometimes the rustling of trees agitated by the wind, sometimes roaring torrents and the sea breaking upon cliffs, sometimes the bells of flocks and herds, and the distant song of the herdsman.

"What has befallen me? Whence do I come?" sighed I, in a low voice, and with great difficulty.

The old man still hovered over me, and his eyes were anxiously directed towards me. "I save you," said he, in an inexpressibly soft tone. "Banish fear—you have seen your life and death. Weak being, be a man! I shall not save you a second time."

Thereupon everything again became indistinct before my eyes, and it appeared to me as if I were in a cavern, into which the daylight gleamed through clefts in the rock. But the old man was still bending over me, and said, "Now you are saved, and I leave you: I have fulfilled your wishes."

"But," I sighed, "my Fanny—my children; give them to me in this desert!"

The old man said, "They are yours."

"And, if it be in your power, efface for ever from my mind the recollection of my crimes."

The old man said, "I shall so obliterate your crimes from your memory that they shall never afflict you more."

While saying this he melted away like a vapour, and I stared at the grey rock above me, and comprehended nothing. But I felt inexpressibly comfortable, although all appeared like a fairy-tale.

While staring at the rocks an invisible being pressed its lips to mine, and I felt a warm kiss.

THE NEW WORLD.

THE kiss brought me back to earth. I had imagined that my eyes were open, but I discovered that they must be closed, for I heard the sound of light footsteps near me, and yet I saw no one in the cave.

Then I felt a soft breath, and two sweet lips touched mine. By degrees I recovered the use of my senses. I heard children whispering. Dream and reality floated confusedly through my brain, but gradually became separated until clearer perception and then perfect consciousness returned.

I felt that I was lying on something hard and uncomfortable, and it appeared to me as if I were on the sofa in my garden-house. I opened my eyes, and Fanny, whose kisses had awakened me, hung over me. Our children clapped their hands joyfully when they saw that I was awake, and climbed up on the sofa, and over me, exclaiming, one after the other, "Papa—good morning, papa;" and my wife, with tears of joy in her eyes, threw her arms around me, and reproached me for having slept all night in the garden-house. She concluded by saying that had not Christopher, our servant, come from the inn a quarter of an hour previously, and made a noise in the kitchen with the maids, thereby betraying my arrival, no one would have known anything about it.

The terrible Walpurga's dream, however, had such an effect upon me, that I lay for a long time without daring to trust either my eyes or ears. I looked for the imaginary cave in the desert, but I still saw the garden-house; and drums, rocking-horses, and whips still lay on the floor. Fanny's knitting-basket was on the table—everything just as I had found it when I had selected my quarters for the night.

"And has Christopher only now come from the inn? Did he pass the night there?" I inquired.

"Of course he did, you whimsical being!" said Fanny, stroking my cheek. "He asserts that you ordered him to do so. Why did you pass the night on this hard sofa? Why did you not awaken us? What pleasure it would have given us to receive you!"

I started up joyfully. "You have, then, slept well and tranquilly all night?" I inquired.

"Only too well," she replied. "If I had had a suspicion that you were in the garden-house, there would have been an end to sleep; I would have crept to you like a ghost. Do you not know that it was Walpurga's night, when witches and hobgoblins play their pranks?"

"I know it only too well," said I, rubbing my eyes, and smiling joyfully at the idea, that instead of committing crimes I had been merely dreaming; that neither inn nor town were burnt, and that neither the Prague Red-coat nor Julia had visited me.

I clasped my beloved Fanny more closely and more fervently to my heart; and with her beside me, and the children on my knee, I experienced more strongly than ever the happiness of having a pure heart and good conscience. At times I felt as if I were in another world, in which everything appeared vague as in a dream; and I often looked at the roofs of the houses in the little town, in order to convince myself that I had not thrown a lighted candle into the straw.

During the whole course of my life I had never had a dream that was so connected, so vivid, and so frightful. It was not fantastic until near the end, when it became mixed up with returning consciousness.

We marched triumphantly through the pretty garden and into the cheerful house, where I was warmly welcomed by the servants; and when I had changed my dress I went, loaded with toys for my sons, into Fanny's room, where the young mother sat beside her excited children.

I felt more and more transported with joy every time I looked at my darlings, and, throwing my arms round Fanny, I gave her the present that I had purchased for her in Prague, saying, "Fanny, this is your birthday."

"Never," she said, "have I celebrated it more agreeably. I have you with me again, and I have sent to invite our friends to come and participate in the pleasure that we feel at your return. I hope you do not disapprove of my having done so. Now sit down beside us, and relate minutely how you have passed your time."

I had had, however, the oppressive dream too recently, and I thought that the best way to dismiss it from my mind would be to relate it. Fanny listened and looked very grave. At the end, however, she smiled and said, "One might really believe in the witchcraft of Walpurga's night. You have dreamed a sermon, and you ought to profit by it, and become a better man; for assuredly your guardian angel has spoken to you. Write your dream, for it is more curious than many a biography. You know I attach great importance to dreams; for although they foretell nothing, they tell us what we are, and are sometimes the clearest reflection of the state of the mind."

THE TEMPTER WITH THE TEMPTATION.

ON that very day the interest attached to my Walpurga's dream was increased by an occurrence which, although not very extraordinary, was at all events remarkable.

My wife had invited some friends to a little family *fête*, and the weather being very fine, we were dining in the large upper room of

the garden-house. The Walpurga's dream was already half-banished from my memory by the more charming reality, when my servant informed me that a stranger, a Baron Mandevil,* from Dresden, wished to speak to me. Fanny saw that I was startled, and observed, "You need not fear the tempter, unless he bring the temptation with him, nor ought you to fear even the temptation when I am beside you."

I went down, and on the sofa upon which I had slept sat the Red-coat of Prague. He stood up and received me like an old acquaintance, saying: "You see I have kept my promise, and I must now see your charming Fanny, with whom I by chance became acquainted by means of her confidential letters. You must not be jealous. And," continued he, pointing into the garden, "I bring also two guests with me—my brother and his wife; one of whom, my sister-in-law, is already acquainted with you. We met by chance in Dresden, and are now travelling together."

While I was expressing my pleasure, a stout gentleman stepped from the garden into the small room in which we were standing, accompanied by a lady in a travelling dress. Imagine my horror! It was Julia, the wife of the Polish nobleman.

Although Julia at first grew pale, she was less embarrassed than I was. When I had made a few polite speeches, I conducted my guests to the upper room, and presented my Fanny to them, whereupon the tempter, transformed into the visitor from Prague, paid her the most flattering compliments. "Even while I was in Prague I adored you, when, unknown to your husband, I became acquainted with all the little secrets that you confided to him."

"I know all," said Fanny. "You paid fourteen hundred dollars for the secrets; nevertheless you are a wicked man, for you have caused my Robert to pass an uneasy night."

"That is not the end of the affair, Fanny," said I; "for here is the tempter, and there"—introducing the wife of my Polish guest—"is Julia."

Women soon get over their embarrassment. Fanny embraced Julia as if she had been her sister, and placing the tempter at her right hand, and the temptation at her left, she, with a roguishly-warning gesture, called out to me: "As far as possible from you?"

Fanny and Julia, although they had never met before, had a great deal to say to each other, and enjoyed making me the subject of their raillery. For me it was peculiarly interesting to see these two women side by side—both charming; but Julia was only a handsome woman, Fanny an angel.

While walking in the garden, I heard from Julia that she was very

* The English name Mandeville is most probably derived from the German name, Manteufel (Mandevil).

happy, for her husband's good qualities caused her to love him with all her heart. For her brother-in-law she felt the tender and unbounded reverence of a child. He had formerly, she related to me, travelled a great deal, and now lived in Poland on a small estate near her husband's property, where the benevolent philosopher occupied himself with books and country pursuits. She spoke of him with enthusiasm, and maintained that there was not a nobler man in the world. This caused me to come to the conclusion that one ought not to judge of people too much by their countenances.

"Why," said I, subsequently, to the worthy mysteriously-speaking Red-coat, "did you say to me in Prague, 'Do you know me now, and what I want from you?'—for exactly these words struck me in Prague, and haunted me afterwards in my dream."

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, "when I brought the pocket-book I was at liberty to say what I pleased, and I wished to give you a hint that I had found it, in order that you might feel confidence in me, and make some allusion to the lost article; but if I had been the most suspicious-looking person in the world, you could not have remained more incommunicative. I perceived, however, your uneasiness, and had little doubt that I had found the man of whom I was in search."

I now related my dream to him.

"Hurrah!" he exclaimed, "for the Walpurga spirits! The dream deserves to form a chapter in a work on moral philosophy and psychology; and if you do not write it down minutely, I shall write it myself and send it to you in print, for it contains marvellously valuable maxims. I am glad, however, that towards the end I had the honour to shine as an angel of light; were this not the case, I should feel no wish to hear any more of your Walpurga's night adventures."

We passed a happy day together—Fanny with Julia, and I with the truly intellectual Mandevil.

In the evening we accompanied our guests to the inn, and while standing at the door Fanny said to me: "We must take leave here, for the beautiful temptation must not be accompanied a step farther! Your Walpurga's dream contains also a good lesson for me. Do you know who I am, sir! and what your Fanny expects from you?"

The Dog.

FROM THE RUSSIAN OF TURGUENIEF : BY W. R. S. RALSTON.

“BUT if you once admit the possibility of the supernatural—the possibility of its intervention in affairs of real life—then, let me ask you, in that case what part is common-sense to be expected to play?” Thus spoke Anton Stepanich, folding his hands in front of his waistcoat.

Anton Stepanich was a “state-councillor” in rank; he served in some out-of-the-way department or other, and as he spoke deliberately and incisively, and in a deep voice, he commanded universal respect. He had recently had the Cross of Stanislas “stuck upon him,” to make use of the expression of the envious.

“That is perfectly true,” remarked Skvorevich.

“No one would dream of denying that,” added Kinarevich.

“I quite agree,” chimed in, from a corner, the falsetto voice of M. Finoplentof, the master of the house.

“Well, I can’t agree, I must confess, for something supernatural once happened to me myself,” said a middle-aged man, of middle height, somewhat bald and rather paunchy, who sat near the stove, and had held his tongue up to this point. Everyone who was in the room looked at him with surprise and curiosity, and a dead silence ensued.

The speaker was the proprietor of a small estate in the government of Kalouga, who had but recently come to St. Petersburg. He had served long ago in the hussars, had ruined himself at play, and had retired from the army and settled down in the country. But the changes in the laws affecting landed property had greatly diminished his income, so he had come up to the capital in order to look out for some convenient place under government. He could boast of no special ability, and he had no family interest; but he trusted implicitly to the friendship of an old comrade of his whom he had once helped to cudgel a swindler, and who had suddenly, somehow or other, become a great man. Besides this, he relied on his luck—and it did not fail him. After a few days he obtained the post of Inspector of Crown Magazines—a snug berth, and one even of distinction, and not requiring any exceptional capabilities. The magazines themselves as yet existed only in theory, and it was not even quite clear what they were intended to contain. But their construction had been resolved upon as a measure of public economy.

Anton Stepanich was the first to break the silence. “What! My dear sir,” he began, “do you seriously affirm that something super-

natural has happened to you—I mean something which is not in harmony with the laws of nature?”

“I do,” replied “my dear sir,” whose name was Porfiry Kapitonich.

“Not in harmony with the laws of nature?” loudly repeated Anton Stepanich, who was evidently pleased with the phrase.

“Certainly—yes—exactly as you are good enough to say.”

“That is most wonderful! What is your opinion, gentlemen?”

Anton Stepanich had tried hard to convey an expression of irony to his features, but nothing came of his attempt—or rather, to speak more correctly, nothing except that the state-councillor looked as if he smelt something disagreeable. “Perhaps you will be kind enough, my dear sir,” he continued, turning to the Kalouga proprietor, “to give us the particulars of so singular an occurrence?”

“Certainly—by all means,” answered the proprietor; and having quietly moved into the middle of the room, he began as follows:

“I have, gentlemen, as you probably know—or, perhaps, don’t know—a small estate in the district of Kozelsk. I used to get some good out of it formerly, but nowadays, of course, one can expect nothing but unpleasantness. However, we won’t talk politics. Well, on that same property of mine I have a little homestead, the usual kitchen-garden, a pond with some carp in it, a few barns of one sort or other, and—well, a sort of den for my sinful carcase—everything in bachelor fashion. Well, one night, about six years ago, I came home rather late. I had been out at a neighbour’s playing cards, but I wasn’t the least obfuscated, let me beg you to observe. I took off my clothes, got into bed, and blew out the light. Just imagine, gentlemen! As soon as I had put the light out something began moving about under the bed. Thinks I, ‘A rat? No, it’s not a rat.’ The creature bustled about, rubbed itself against things, took to scratching itself. Last of all, I heard it wring its ears.

“Plain enough what it was—a dog. But wherever should a dog have come from? I don’t keep any myself. ‘Some runaway, I suppose,’ I said to myself, and called my servant—Filka is his name. He came in with a light. ‘How’s this, brother Filka?’ I say. ‘What carelessness is this of yours? Why, a dog has got in there under my bed!’

“‘What dog?’ says he.

“‘How should I know?’ say I; ‘that’s your lookout, not to let your master be bothered.’

“My Filka stooped down, and began poking the light about under the bed. ‘Why, there’s no dog there,’ he said.

“I stooped down myself and looked. Quite true; there was no dog there. Here was a wonder! I looked up at Filka, who began to smile. ‘What are you grinning at, you idiot?’ I exclaimed. ‘The dog most likely bolted out into the passage when you opened the door. You saw nothing of it, you booby, because you’re always half-asleep.

I daresay you fancy I'm drunk now, don't you?' He wanted to say something in reply, but I turned him out, rolled myself up snugly, and heard nothing more that night.

"But the next night—just imagine—the very same thing came again. The moment I had blown out the candle, there it was, scratching and wringing its ears. Again I called Filka, and again he looked under the bed. And again nothing was to be seen! I sent him away and put out the light. Devil take it—there was the dog! And a dog plainly enough. One could distinctly hear its breathing, and the way in which it grubbed in his hide with its teeth and hunted fleas—no mistake at all about it.

"'Filka!' I cried, 'come here without a light!'

"He came. "'Well,' said I, 'do you hear?'

"'Yes,' said he. I couldn't see the lad, but I could feel that he was in a fright.

"'What do you think of it?' said I.

"'What do you expect me to think of it, Porfiry Kapitonich?' said he. 'Maybe, it's a temptation.'

"'Hold your tongue with your temptations, you sinner!' said I.

"But the voices of both of us quavered, and we shivered as if we had the ague—all in the dark, you know. I lighted a candle. All was still. No dog was there—only Filka and I, both white as clay. So I kept the candle burning all night. And I assure you, gentlemen, believe me or not as you please, that from that night forward, for the space of six weeks, it was the same story over and over again. At last I actually got accustomed to the thing, and took to putting out the candle—for I never can sleep with a candle burning in the room. 'Let it kick up a row,' I thought. 'After all, it does me no harm.'"

"Well, one can see you're not of a timorous nature," broke in Anton Stepanich, with a half disdainful, half patronising smile. "A thorough hussar, plain enough."

"I shouldn't be afraid of you, anyhow," replied Porfiry Kapitonich, who really did look like a hussar for the moment. "But listen. One of my neighbours paid me a visit, the one whom I had been playing cards with before. He took potluck with me, and then dropped some fifty roubles by way of a remembrance of his visit. Night set in.

"'Time to be off,' said he. But I had an idea of my own.

"'Stop,' said I; 'sleep here, Vasily Vasilievich. To-morrow, please God, you'll win back your money.' He reflected, did my Vasily Vasilievich—reflected, and stayed. I had a bed made up for him in my own room. Well, we went to bed, smoked a little, gossiped a little—all about the fair sex, as the custom is in bachelor society—and, of course, laughed a little. Presently I saw that Vasily Vasilievich had blown out his candle and had turned his back towards me,

as if to say '*Shlafenzerele*.' I waited a bit, and then put out my light too. And fancy! I hadn't had time to think, 'There'll be such a piece of work in a minute!' before my little pet had begun its usual shindy. And not only did it make a shindy, but it bolted from under the bed, scampered across the room, scratched the floor with its claws, wrung its ears, and all of a sudden upset a chair that stood close by Vasily Vasilievich's bed!

" 'Porfiry Kapitonich,' said he—just in his usual tone of voice, you know—'why, I didn't know you'd got a dog. What sort is it—a setter?'

" 'I've no dog,' said I, 'never had one.'

" 'What's that, then?'

" 'What's that?' said I. 'If you'll only light a candle, you'll see for yourself.'

" 'That not a dog?'

" 'No.'

" Vasily Vasilievich turned round in bed. 'You're joking, you brute?'

" 'Not I—I'm not joking.'

" I heard him go 'chirk, chirk' with a lucifer, and all the time the creature wouldn't keep still, but went on scratching its flanks. The match struck a light, and, *basta!* not a trace of the creature was to be seen! Vasily Vasilievich looked at me, and I looked at him.

" 'What sort of riddle is this?' he said.

" 'This,' said I, 'is such a riddle that if you were to set Socrates himself on one side, and Frederick the Great on the other, even they could make nothing out of it.' And then and there I told him the whole story. Didn't my Vasily Vasilievich just jump out of bed!—exactly as if he'd been scalded!

" 'Horses!' he cried. 'Horses!' I tried to soothe him, but it wasn't the least use. He only uttered exclamations of horror.

" 'Oh dear! Oh dear!' he cried. 'I won't stop, not a single instant! After all this you're evidently a doomed man! Horses!'

" However, at last, I managed to make him change his mind. Only he had his bed moved into another room, and he kept night-lights burning in every corner. By the morning he had calmed down, and as we drank our tea he gave me this piece of advice:—

" 'You should try and leave home for a few days, Porfiry Kapitonich,' he said; 'perhaps that plague of a thing would let you alone then.'

" I ought to tell you that that neighbour of mine was a man of vast ability. The way in which he had managed his mother-in-law, among other people, was wonderful. He slipped a piece of stamped paper right under her hand—chose a most sentimental moment; she became as soft as silk, and gave him a power of attorney, which pu

the whole of her property in his hands! What need one say after that? That's certainly something like business—to squeeze a mother-in-law! I leave it to you to say if it isn't. However, he went away from me in rather a bad humour. I had punished him again to the tune of a hundred or so. He even gave me a scolding, 'You're ungrateful,' he said, 'there's no feeling in you.' But I, what harm had I done? However, that's another matter. But I didn't forget his advice, and that very day I drove into the town, and took up my abode in an inn kept by an old Raskolnik* of my acquaintance. He was an excellent old fellow, though he'd got rather morose from living alone, for he'd lost all his family. But he strongly objected to tobacco, and for dogs he had the greatest aversion—so great, to give you an idea of it, that I believe he would sooner have rent himself in twain than have allowed a dog to come into his room.

" 'For,' he used to say, 'how could such a thing be possible? On those walls, in that room of mine, the Blessed Virgin herself deigns to dwell, and there, forsooth, a heathen dog too must needs poke its unclean snout!'"

"Very unenlightened, of course. But as to that, my idea is, let everyone act up to such lights as he may have had vouchsafed to him."

"But you are a great philosopher, I see," said Anton Stepanich, again interrupting the speaker, and smiling in the same way as before.

This time Porfiry Kapitonich frowned unmistakably. "How great a philosopher I am," he said, with a threatening tug at his moustaches, "is not generally known as yet; but it would give me great pleasure to read you a few lessons."

We all fixed our eyes on Anton Stepanich, everyone expecting that he would reply by some haughty phrase, or at least by a fiery glance. But the state-councillor changed his smile from one of disdain to one of indifference, yawned, moved one of his feet, and nothing more.

"Well," continued Porfiry Kapitonich, "I took up my quarters with the old fellow. He gave me, on the strength of our acquaintance, a room which was not one of his best. He himself had a bed in it, behind the partition; but it sufficed for me. Didn't I just suffer torments that night? The room was small, the heat was awful, and then the stifling air and the flies,—ones that stuck to you with a will! In the corner stood an extra big case holding some very old sacred pictures, their thin metal casings all tarnished with age. The whole room smelt of oil and some sort of specific. On the bedstead lay a

* Dissenter. In this case, a member of the respectable but bigoted body of "Old Believers," the Nonconformists of Russia, who cannot abide tobacco, potatoes, and the liturgical innovations introduced by the Patriarch Nikon.

couple of feather-beds. Whenever you moved a pillow, out ran a tarakan* from under it. Well, from sheer ennui I had drunk no end of tea. It was a bad business, plain enough! I lay down, but sleep was out of the question. Meanwhile, behind the partition, the landlord went on for ever so long sighing, grunting, reading his prayers. At last, however, he became still. Then I heard him begin to snore—but so quietly, courteously as it were, after the fashion of the old school. I had put out my light long before—only the lamp continued burning before the holy pictures. Evidently a hindrance! Well, I had an idea. Up I got quietly, crept up to the lamp barefooted, and blew it out. Nothing occurred. ‘Ha!’ thought I, ‘so it seems it’s good for nothing away from home!’ But I’d only just got back into bed when all the row began again. There was the creature, scratching, and rubbing, and wringing its ears—all in first-rate style. Very good. Down I lay, and waited for what was going to happen. Presently I could hear that the old man had awoke.

“‘Master!’ says he—‘Master!’

“‘What’s the matter?’

“‘Is it you who’s put the lamp out?’ And then, without waiting for my answer, he suddenly broke out with ‘What’s that?—What’s that? A dog!—A dog! Ah, you accursed Nikonian!’†

“‘Put off your scolding for a bit,’ said I. ‘You’d better come over here instead. Something worth wondering at is going on here.’

“The old man rummaged about behind the partition, and then came into my room, with a very, very thin yellow wax-candle in his hand. I looked at him with no little wonder. He was all over hair, and his ears were mossy-like, and his eyes were as fierce as a polecat’s. He’d a white felt cap on his head, and a beard, also white, hung down to his girdle; and he’d got on fur boots, and a shirt, and a waistcoat with copper buttons, and everything about him smelt of juniper. Just as he was he went up to the holy pictures, crossed himself three times in two-fingered style,‡ lighted the lamp, crossed himself again, and then, turning to me, merely uttered a sort of croak, which meant ‘Explain!’ Well, I didn’t delay, but then and there gave him a circumstantial account of the matter. He heard all my story to the end, never letting fall so much as a single observation. All he did was merely to shake his head from time to time. Then he sat down on my bed, still remaining perfectly silent, scratched his chest, the back of his neck, and so on, but didn’t say a word.

“‘Well,’ said I, ‘what do you think of it, Fedul Ivanich? Isn’t it a temptation?’

* A kind of cockroach.

† A follower of Nikon, as opposed to an “Old Believer.”

‡ The Raskolniks differ from the Orthodox in their manner of making the sign of the Cross.

"The old man looked hard at me. 'What's that you're fancying? A temptation! You might well have one in your house, you tobacco-smoker! But here, forsooth! Only remember, please, what holinesses are here! And then to talk about temptations!'

"'But if it isn't a temptation, what is it then?'

"The old man again held his peace, again scratched himself, and at last began to speak, but indistinctly, for his moustaches kept getting into his mouth. 'Go to the town' of Bielef. No one can help you but one man, and that man lives at Bielef—one of us. If he's willing to help you, so much the better for you; if he isn't, that can't be helped.'

"'But how am I to find this man?' said I.

"'I can give you directions for that,' said he. 'But to go talking about temptations! This is a vision—it may be a revelation. But no—you couldn't attain so high as that. That would be too high a flight for you. Now lie down and go to sleep in the name of our Father Christ. I am going to burn incense; and to-morrow morning we'll have a talk. The morning is wiser than the evening, you know.'

"Well, the next morning we had a talk—only in the meantime I was all but choked by that same incense—and the old man gave me the following instructions. I was to go to the square after arriving at Bielef, and ask at the second shop on the right for one Prokhorich; and when I had found Prokhorich, I was to give him a letter; and the letter was nothing more than a scrap of paper on which were the following words: 'In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen. To Sergyei Prokhorich Pervushin. Trust this man.—Feoduly Ivanich.' And underneath: 'For God's sake send me some cabbage.' Well, I thanked the old man, and without further consideration ordered a tarantasse to be got ready, and drove to Bielef. For I argued this way: 'Although, let's suppose, no great harm comes of my nightly visitor, yet, at all events, it's disturbing, and, to settle the matter, it's somewhat unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.' What's your opinion?"

"And did you really go to Bielef?" whispered M. Finoplentof.

"Straight to Bielef. When I got to the square I went to the second shop on the right, and asked for Prokhorich. 'Is there such a man, please?'

"'There is,' they said.

"'And where does he live?'

"'On the Oka, beyond the gardens.'

"'In whose house?'

"'In his own.'

"Well, I went to the Oka, and found out his house—that is to say, in reality, not a house, but a mere hovel. I looked about. A man in a patched blue caftan and a ragged cap—a regular *bourgeois* in appear-

ance—was digging in a cabbage-bed, with his back towards me. I went up to him. ‘You’re So-and-so, are you not?’

“He turned round, and, I give you my word, I had never seen such piercing eyes before in all my life. As for the rest, he’d a face no bigger than one’s fist, a little wedge-shaped beard, and he’d lost his teeth—an old man evidently.

“‘Yes, I’m So-and-so,’ he said. ‘What is it you want?’

“‘Here’s what I want,’ said I, and handed him the letter.

He looked at me fixedly, like that, and said, ‘Please come into my room; I cannot read without glasses.’

“Well, we went into his hovel, and it was a hovel, indeed—poverty-stricken, empty, tumbledown; one wondered how it could stand up at all. On the wall hung a picture of the old school, as black as a coal, only the whites of the eyes in the faces gleaming brightly. He took a pair of steel spectacles from a small table, put them on his nose, read the letter, and then looked at me again through his glasses.

“‘You have need of me?’ said he.

“‘I have, indeed,’ said I.

“‘Well,’ said he, ‘if that’s the case, tell me about it, and I will listen.’ And just fancy! He sat down, took a check-handkerchief out of his pocket, and spread it over his knees—and a handkerchief all in holes too—and looked at me with as important an air as if he’d been some senator or minister, and never even asked me to sit down. And, what was odder still, I felt all of a sudden that I was frightened; so frightened was I that my heart simply sank into my heels. As for him, he just pierced me through with his eyes—nothing more. However, I got over it, and told him the whole story. He held his tongue, sank his head in his shoulders, chewed his lips, and took to questioning me, again with the air of a senator, in a dignified manner, and taking his time over it, like this: ‘What is your name? Your age? Who were your parents? A bachelor, or married?’ Then he chewed his lips again, frowned, lifted a finger, and said, ‘Bow down before the sacred picture of the holy and venerable saints Sozimus and Sabbas of Solovetsk.’

“I bowed down to the ground, and remained like that without rising; for I felt so afraid of that man, and so humble, that I believe I should instantly have done anything he commanded. I see you laugh, gentlemen, but I swear it was no laughing matter for me then.

“‘Rise, sir,’ he said at last. ‘It is possible to help you. This has not been sent to you for a punishment, but as a warning. It shows that care is being taken about you. Somebody prays for you, it seems, fortunately for you. Now go to the bazaar, and buy a puppy, and keep it constantly by your side, day and night. Your visions will stop then, and besides, that dog will be of great service to you.’

“Daylight seemed to break in upon my mind. How delighted I was

with these words! I bowed low to Prokhorich, and was just going away, when I remembered that I mustn't do so without making him some recompense, so I took a three-rouble note out of my purse. But he waved my hand aside, and said, 'Give it to our chapel, or to the poor. That service cannot be paid for.'

"I bowed my head again before him, almost to the girdle, and marched straight off to the bazaar. Just fancy! No sooner had I reached the shops, when—see!—there came to meet me a frieze-coat, carrying under its arm a setter puppy, two months old, with a cinnamon-coloured skin, white lips, and white forepaws. 'Stop,' I said, to the coat. 'What's the price of that?'

"'Well, a couple of roubles.'

"'There's three.'

"He wondered, thought the gentleman had gone out of his mind; but I flung the note in his face, seized the puppy by the middle, and jumped into my tarantasse. The coachman put the horses to directly, and that same evening I was back again home. I kept the puppy wrapped up inside my coat all the way, and it never whined once, and I kept saying to it, 'Tresorushko! Tresorushko!'

"Well, as soon as I got home I gave it food and drink, had some straw brought and made up a bed for it, and then jumped into bed myself. I blew out the light. All was dark.

"'Well,' said I, 'begin there!'

All was quiet.

"'Begin there,' I said, 'you this thing and that thing!'

"Not a sound did it make, even in fun. I began to feel very courageous.

"'Now, then, can't you begin—you this thing, and that thing, and the other thing?'

"But nothing stirred. All was over! One could hear nothing but the puppy's breathing.

"'Filka!' I cried. 'Filka! Come here, you goose!'

"He came.

"'Do you hear the dog?'

"'No, master,' he said; 'I don't hear anything;' and he began chuckling.

"'And you'll never hear it any more now. Here's half a rouble for you.'

"'Give me your hand to kiss,' said the poor fellow, trying to get at me in the dark. As for me, I can tell you, I was overjoyed."

"And so it all came to an end?" asked Anton Stepanich, this time not ironically.

"The vision really did come to an end, and there was no longer any disturbance. But wait a little; the whole story isn't ended yet. My Tresorushko grew up; his body became stout, his feet spread; he'd long

ears, a thick tail, hanging lips—a regular *pile-avance*; and, besides that, he became wonderfully attached to me. We've wretched sport our way; but anyhow, as I'd got a dog, I was obliged to provide myself with a gun. Tresor and I began to beat up all the country round. Sometimes we got a hare (and those hares! good heavens, how he used to chivey them!)—sometimes a duck or a quail. But the main point was, Tresor never left me. Wherever I was, there he was too. Even in my bath I used to have him with me—it's a fact. One of our ladies wanted to turn me out of her drawing-room on account of Tresor, but didn't I just raise a storm! I wonder how many of her window-panes I smashed, for one thing!

“Well, one day—it was in summer, and I may as well tell you there was such a drought that no one could remember the like: the air was full of what wasn't quite smoke nor quite mist, but a sort of fog; there was a smell of burning everywhere; the sun looked like a red-hot bullet; and as to dust, you couldn't sneeze through it. People went about with their mouths wide open as bad as crows. I was tired of always sitting at home in complete *dishabille*, with the shutters closed, and so I walked over to the house of a lady-neighbour who lived about a verst from me; and really she was a charming person, that neighbour of mine. She was still young and blooming, and very attractive, only a little variable in her moods. But that isn't a fault in a woman—it even gives pleasure sometimes. Well, I had got to her door, and that journey seemed to me as if it had had too much salt in it. ‘Well,’ I thought, ‘now Nimfodora Semenovna will refresh me with bilberry-water, and other cooling drinks too;’ and I had already laid my hand on the lock, when all of a sudden, from behind the corner of one of the cottages belonging to the servants, there began a row, with squealings and screechings of children. I looked round. Good God! I saw coming straight at me a great red beast, which at first sight I didn't know was a dog, with yawning jaws and bloodshot eyes and bristling hide. Scarcely had I had time to get out a sob, when that huge monster bounded on to the steps, flew straight at me, and got its forepaws on my chest. What a position! Half-dead with fright, I couldn't lift a finger. I was utterly beside myself, and could see nothing but the terrible white tusks just in front of my nose, the scarlet tongue all over foam. But at that very moment a dark body shot in front of me like a bullet. It was my darling Tresor who had come to my rescue, and who seized the other beast by the throat, and stuck to it like a leech. The brute began to growl and gnash its teeth, then it tumbled backwards. I tore the door open at a pull, and bolted into the passage. There I stopped, utterly done up, leaning all my weight against the door. But on the steps outside I heard a desperate conflict going on. Presently I began to shout and call for help. The whole house was alarmed, and Nimfodora Semenova

rushed to the spot with her hair all in disorder. Meanwhile, however, the noise outside had diminished, and presently a cry was heard of 'Stop him—stop him! Shut the gates!' I opened the door—just a little, like that. I peeped out. The monster was no longer on the steps, and the courtyard was full of excited people waving their arms in the air, or stooping to provide themselves with chunks of wood, exactly as if they had all got the plague.

" 'To the village! He's off to the village!' screeched some woman or other in an enormous cap, poking her head out of an attic-window. .

"I went outside. 'Where's Tresor?' I cried; and then I saw my preserver coming from the gate, lame, torn, all over blood. 'Whatever is the meaning of all this?' I asked the people, who were circling round in the yard as if they were dazed.

" 'A mad dog!' they reply, 'one of the count's. It's been hanging about here since yesterday.' (We had a neighbour, a count; he'd brought over a lot of foreign dogs, awfully big ones.)

"My legs trembled beneath me. Off I ran to a glass to see if I was bitten. No, thank God, there was nothing to be seen, except that my face had turned perfectly green, and no wonder. But as for Nimfodora Semenovna, there she lay on the sofa, clucking like a hen. One could understand that easily enough. In the first place, nerves; in the next, sentiment. Well, anyhow she came to herself, and asked me languishingly, in this sort of way, 'Are you still alive?'

" 'Yes,' said I, 'and it was Tresor who saved me.'

" 'Ah!' she said, 'how noble! And has the mad dog killed him?'

" 'No,' said I, 'not killed, but wounded horribly.'

" 'Ah!' said she, 'in that case he must be shot instantly.'

" 'Why, no,' said I, 'I can't agree to that; I shall try and cure him.'

"At this moment Tresor began scratching at the door, and I was going to open it for him.

" 'Ah!' she cried, 'what are you going to do? Why, he will bite us all!'

" 'Pardon me,' said I, 'the poison doesn't take effect so soon.'

" 'Ah!' said she, 'how can that be? Why, you must be out of your wits!'

" 'Nimfochka,' said I, 'calm yourself; be reasonable.'

"But she suddenly began to scream: 'Go away; go away instantly with your horrid dog!'

" 'Very well,' said I.

" 'Instantly!' she cried—'this very moment! Be off with you, you monster, and never dare to show your face in my sight again. Why, you may be raging mad yourself!'

" 'Very good, madam,' said I; 'only let me have a carriage, for I'm afraid of walking home now.'

"She looked at me wildly. 'Give, give him whatever he wants—open carriage, shut carriage, droshtky—only let him begone as quickly as possible. Ah, what eyes!—ah, what eyes he has!' And so saying out she went, giving a slap on the cheek to a servant-maid she met on the way, and presently I could hear her go off again into hysterics.

"And believe me or not, gentlemen, I assure you that from that very day I broke off all acquaintance with Nimfodora Semenovna; and, on mature consideration of all the circumstances, I cannot help adding, that, if it were only for that single affair, I should feel myself under the deepest obligations to my friend Tresor till the day of my death.

"Well, I told them to get the carriage ready, put Tresor on it, and drove home. When I got there I examined him, washed his wounds, and thought to myself, 'As soon as it's light to-morrow, I'll take him to the Efremof *babka*'. (This *babka* is an old peasant, a wonderful fellow. He whispers over some water a bit—some say he puts snake's saliva into it—gives it you to drink, and your complaint is gone, carried off, just as if he had taken it off with his hand.) 'And while I'm about it,' I thought, 'I'll have myself bled at Efremof; it's a good thing for a fright.'

"Well, while I was thinking about all this it had become perfectly dark—evidently time for repose. I went to bed, and Tresor was there too, of course. Well, I don't know whether it was heat or fright, thoughts or fleas, but I couldn't get to sleep, do what I would. There's no describing the dreary state of mind I got into. I tried drinking water; I opened the window; I played the 'Komarinsky Moujik' on the guitar, with Italian variations. But no! I felt myself being driven out of the room—no help for it. At last, I made up my mind; took a pillow, a sheet, and a counterpane, and went across the garden to the barn, where the hay was, and there I took up my quarters; and I found it so pleasant there, gentlemen! The night was still—very still; only every now and then the breeze would glide over one's face like a woman's hand, ever so softly. The hay sent forth its fragrance—no tea could smell better; the cicadas trilled away on the apple-trees; the quail would pipe all of a sudden, and one felt he too, the rogue, was well off, sitting out there in the dew by the side of his mate. And what beauty there was in the sky! The stars shone bright, and sometimes a cloud—white, white as cotton-wool—would sail by, and hardly seem to be moving.

"Well, there I lay, but somehow or other I couldn't get to sleep there either. Meditation took hold of me, and what I meditated about most was wisdom; thinking that, you see, Prokhorych had told me the meaning of the warning correctly, and wondering why it should be precisely me for whom such wonderful things should be

brought to pass. I went on wondering, especially as I couldn't understand it at all, and Tresor kept whining, rolled up in the hay; its wounds hurt it. And I will tell you another thing too, which prevented my sleeping; that was—you'll hardly believe it—the moon. There she was, right in front of me—perfectly round, big, yellow, flat. She seemed to me to be staring at me, and that too in such an insolent saucy manner that at last I actually put out my tongue at her, that I did.

“ ‘Well,’ thought I, ‘what are you so curious about?’ I turned away from her, but she crept into my ear, and poured a flood of light over the back of my neck that seemed to drench me like rain. I opened my eyes to see what was to be seen. Every blade of grass, every tiny sprig of wood in the hay, the smallest bits of spider's web—how clean-cut, how delicately carved, they seemed, to be sure! It couldn't be helped, that was plain enough. I rested my head on my hand, and looked and looked. Sleeping was out of the question. You may believe me or not, but my eyes grew as big and opened as wide as any hare's, just as if they hadn't the slightest idea what sleep was like. It actually seemed as if those same eyes of mine would devour everything. The door of the barn was wide open, and one could see some five versts afield; you could see things and yet you couldn't see them, as is always the case on a moonlit night. Well, I looked, and looked, and didn't even wink, and all of a sudden I fancied I saw something moving—far, far away—thought I saw something indistinctly shadowed out. A little time passed; again the shadow made a move, this time a little nearer—then again, still nearer.

“ ‘Whatever is that?’ I thought. ‘Is it a hare? No,’ I thought; ‘that seems to be something bigger than a hare, and it's not a hare's way of running either.’ I kept looking. Again the shadow appeared, this time moving about like ever such a dark patch on the meadow, the meadow showing whitish-like in the moonlight. Clear enough what it was; some sort of wild beast—a fox or a wolf. My heart shuddered within me. ‘And yet,’ I thought, ‘what is there to be frightened at? Are there few of suchlike beasts that run about on a shiny night?’

“Anyhow, my curiosity was stronger than even my fear. I sat up, opened my eyes wide, and immediately turned cold all over, just as much as if I'd been buried up to the ears in ice. And why? Lord only knows. I looked. The shadow kept growing bigger and bigger, and was evidently making straight for the barn. Now at last one could make out what it was—in reality a wild beast, an immense one, with an enormous head. It came flying, like a whirlwind—like a cannon-ball. Good heavens! What was it? It stopped short for a moment, as if it were trying to get on the scent of something.

“ ‘Good God!’ I think, ‘why, that is—that is the mad dog over again!’ But I couldn't utter a cry or move an inch. It ran up to

the barn-door, gave a look round, uttered a howl, and made straight at me over the hay!

"But, like a lion, bounded my Tresor out of the hay, and jaw to jaw the pair fastened on each other, and rolled over in a heap on to the ground.

"As to what followed, I remember nothing. Only this much do I remember: that just as I was I tumbled head over heels over them both, and then bolted into the garden, and up into my own room in the house. I all but hid myself under the bed—why should I try to deny it? And what bounds, what *lançades*, I made through the garden! Why, the very best *danseuse* who figures away before the Emperor Napoleon on his birthday, even she wouldn't have equalled me.

"However, as soon as I had recovered my senses a little, I called up the whole household, ordered everyone to arm himself, and took a sabre and revolver myself. (I may as well confess I had bought that revolver shortly after the Emancipation, to be ready for whatever might happen, you know; and what a brute the hawkster turned out I bought it of! Out of every three tries there were sure to be two misfires.) Well, I made all these preparations, and so with clubs and lanterns we went, quite a crowd of us, to the barn. We came near—we called out. Not a sound was to be heard. At last we went into the barn. And what did we see? There was my poor Tresor lying dead, his throat all torn open. But of the other accursed brute, not a trace was to be seen.

"As for me, gentlemen, I began to blubber like a calf, and I'm not the least ashamed to say it. I fell on my knees beside the body of what I may call my twice-over preserver, and remained ever so long kissing his head. And in that posture I remained until my old housekeeper, Prascovia, who had run up with the rest to the scene of the fray, brought me back again to my senses.

"‘Whatever are you doing, Porfiry Kapitonich,’ she said, ‘killing yourself like that about a dog? Why, you must have caught cold already, Heaven help us!’ (It's true I was somewhat lightly clad.) ‘But if the dog has lost its life in saving you, surely that must be considered a great honour for it.’

"I didn't agree with Prascovia about that. However, I went home; and as to the mad dog, a soldier of the garrison shot it next day. There can be little doubt it had reached the end of its allotted length of days, for that was the first shot the soldier had ever fired in his life, although he had received the medal for the campaign of 1812. That was how my supernatural experience ended."

The story-teller left off speaking, and began to fill his pipe. As for us, we all looked at each other in perplexity.

"But, perhaps, you are a man of a very holy life," began M. Finoplentof, "and so, by way of recompense." But at that

word he paused, for he sees that Porfiry Kapitonich's cheeks were swelling and reddening, and his eyes were hardly visible ; an explosion was evidently imminent.

"But if you once admit the possibility of the supernatural, the possibility of its intervention in affairs of real life," recommenced Anton Stepanich ;—"then, in that case, what part is common sense to be expected to play ?"

None of us had a single word to say in reply, and we remained plunged in just as great a perplexity as before.

The Idiot.

FROM THE RUSSIAN OF TURGUENIEF* : BY W. R. S. RALSTON.

ABOUT fifteen years ago, some business of an official nature compelled me to pass several days in the town of T. I stopped at a tolerably good hotel, which had been set up, about six months before my arrival, by a Jewish tailor, who had made a good deal of money. They say that it did not flourish long, as is very often the case among us ; but I found it still in all its splendour. Its brand-new furniture uttered cracks that sounded at night like pistol-shots ; the bed-linen, the tablecloths, and the napkins were redolent of soap, and from the painted flooring breathed a scent of olive oil, which in the opinion of the waiter—a man of great elegance but not of irreproachable tidiness—impeded the multiplication of insects. This waiter, who had been body-servant to Prince G., was remarkable for his self-confidence and his free-and-easy manners. He generally wore a tail-coat which did not fit him, and shoes trodden down at heel, held a napkin tucked under his arm, and delivered himself of brief but edifying speeches while gracefully waving his damp hands. He adopted a certain air of patronage towards me, as being one who could appreciate his culture and knowledge of the world. But as far as his lot in life was concerned, he looked on it with a somewhat disillusioned eye.

“ Every one knows,” he once said to me, “ what our position is now. As the proverb says, ‘ Catch him by the tail and fling him out of doors.’ ” His name was Ardalion.

I had several visits to pay to the official magnates of the town. Ardalion found me a carriage and a servant, both of them a good deal the worse for wear ; but, at all events, the servant wore a livery, and the carriage could boast of a coat-of-arms. When I had finished my official visits, I drove to the house of an old friend of my father’s, a landowner, who had been living in T. for a considerable time. It was some twenty years since I had last seen him, and he had had time enough in the interval to marry, to bring up a good-sized family, to become a widower, and to make a fortune. His business lay with the farmers of the taxes on spirits—that is to say, he advanced their caution-money for them at a heavy premium.

“ Risk is noble ! ” he would say ; though, as far as that goes, there was little that was even risky about the matter.

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During the course of our conversation there came into the room, with a light irresolute step, as if she were treading on tiptoes, a girl about seventeen years old, thin and slightly built.

"Let me introduce you to my eldest daughter, Sophie," said my friend. "She has succeeded to her mother's place, keeps house for me, and takes charge of her brothers and sisters."

I bowed to the young lady (who, in the interval, had silently seated herself), thinking, meanwhile, that she by no means looked like either a housekeeper or a governess. Her face wore a quite childlike expression, being round in shape, with small, pretty, but immobile features. From under her arched, somewhat unsymmetrical, and seldom moving eyebrows, her light-blue eyes gazed earnestly, almost with an air of surprise, as if they were looking at something which they had not expected to see. Her pouting little mouth, the upper lip of which was slightly curled, not only wore no smile, but seemed as if it were totally unaccustomed to do so. Underneath the thin covering of her cheeks, the rosy blood manifested itself in narrow flushes of soft colour, which always remained the same, neither increasing nor diminishing. On either side of her small head her fair curls hung in light clusters. Her bosom rose and fell equably; her arms seemed scarcely at their ease, clinging somewhat stiffly to her unbending form. Her blue dress, without a fold, like a child's frock, fell straight down to her little feet. Altogether, the impression made upon me by that girl was of a puzzling but not of an unpleasant nature. What I saw before me was not merely a timid provincial young lady, but a being of a marked individuality, bearing a stamp which to me was quite incomprehensible. She did not exercise on me either an attractive or a repulsive influence. I could not fully understand her, but I felt conscious that I had never before encountered so candid a nature.

It was pity—yes, pity—that was inspired within me, Heaven knows why, by that young, serious existence, seeming to be ever upon the watch. "Not of this world," I thought, although there was nothing specially ideal in the expression of her face, and although she had evidently come into the room for the purpose of performing those housekeeping functions to which her father had alluded.

He began to talk about the sort of life that was led in T.—about the pleasures and comforts which society had to offer there.

"We are very quiet here," he remarked; "the governor is a mope, the Marshal of the Nobility is a bachelor. But the day after tomorrow, as it happens, there will be a grand ball in the Nobles' Assembly Rooms. I recommend you to go to it. There is no lack of beauty here, and besides you will see all our culture."

"Allow me to ask whether you are going to this ball?" I said to my friend's daughter. I wanted to hear the sound of her voice.

"Papa intends to go," she replied, "and I shall go with him." The tone of her voice was soft and deliberate, and she dwelt upon each word as if she were in doubt.

"In that case, allow me to engage you for the first quadrille."

She bowed her head in token of assent, but even then she did not smile.

I went away soon afterwards, and I remember that the expression of her eyes, which she kept steadily fixed upon me, seemed so strange that I could not help glancing over my shoulder to see whether she was not looking at some one or something behind my back.

After having returned to my hotel, and dined off the unvarying *julienne*, cutlets with peas, and a *rabchik* burned to a cinder, I sat down on the sofa and gave myself up to meditation. The subject of my thoughts was Sophie, that enigmatical daughter of my friend; but Ardalion, who was clearing away the dinner-things, interpreted my meditative mood after his own fashion. He ascribed it to ennui. "There are but few amusements in our town for travellers," he began, with his usual air of condescension, at the same time continuing to flick the backs of the chairs with a dirty napkin—"very few."

He stopped speaking, but the big clock, with a lilac rose on its white face, by its hoarse and monotonous ticking seemed to confirm his words. "Ve—ry! Ve—ry!" it ticked away. "No concerts, no theatres," continued Ardalion; "no dances or evening receptions among the nobility. Nothing of the kind exists." He paused a moment, probably to give me time to remark the choiceness of his diction. "People seldom even so much as see each other here; everyone sits at home on his perch, just like an owl. The consequence is, that travellers have simply no place to which to betake themselves." Ardalion looked aside at me.

"But, perhaps—it may be," he continued, in a hesitating manner; "in case you are so disposed"—He again looked hard at me, and smiled, but I suppose he did not perceive any symptoms of my being properly disposed. My elegant attendant went to the door, reflected a moment, turned back again, and shuffling his feet a little, bent down till his lips were close to my ear, smiled a playful smile, and said, "Would not you like to see a ghost?"

I looked at him in utter amazement.

"Yes," he continued, speaking now in a whisper; "there is *such* a man here, quite a common man, and without any education, but he does wonderful things. If for instance you go to him, and want to see any of your dead friends, he will immediately call them up before you."

"How on earth does he do that?"

"That is his secret. For although he is an unlettered man; although, to speak plainly, he hasn't got a word to say for himself,

yet he is very strong in God's gifts. The merchants here show him very great respect."

"And does all the town know about this?"

"Every one knows it who ought to know. But, of course, caution is observed on account of the police. For, whatever one may say, things of that kind are forbidden. And as to the common people—there would be a scandal. The common people, every one knows, take to fisticuffs at a moment's notice."

"Has he ever shown you a ghost?" I asked.

Ardalion nodded affirmatively.

"Yes, sir, he showed me my father—just as if he were alive."

I stared at Ardalion. He smiled, and played with his napkin, and condescendingly, but firmly, looked at me.

"But that is very singular!" I exclaimed at last. "Is it impossible for me to make this man's acquaintance?"

"In a direct manner, quite impossible; one must get at him through his mother. She is a most respectable old woman—sells soused apples on the bridge. If you desire me to do so, I will ask her about it."

"Be so good as to do so."

Ardalion coughed behind his hand.

"And the recompence too, at whatever sum you may fix it (a small one, of course), you must hand over to the old woman. And I, for my part, will explain to her that there is no reason for being afraid of you, inasmuch as you are a traveller—a gentleman. You understand, of course, that all this is a secret, and you will not, under any circumstances, bring her into trouble?"

Ardalion took the tray in one hand, and gracefully imparting a wavy movement both to his own figure and to the tray, he went to the door.

"So I may count upon you, then?" I called after him.

"You may rest assured of that," replied his self-confident voice. "I will have a talk with the old woman, and accurately report her answer."

I will not dwell upon the thoughts which were aroused in my mind by the singular story which Ardalion had told me, but I am ready to confess that I awaited the promised reply with considerable impatience. Late in the evening Ardalion returned, professing to be greatly vexed; he had not been able to find the old woman. However, with a view to stimulating his efforts, I gave him a three-rouble note. On the following morning he reappeared in the room, this time with a joyful face. The old woman had agreed to give me an interview.

"Here, boy!" called out Ardalion, in the corridor. "Come here!" In came a boy about six years old, covered with soot, having his hair

cut short, and in some places entirely wanting; dressed in a very ragged striped dressing-gown, and wearing huge goloshes on his stockingless feet. "Now then, conduct this gentleman, you know where," said Ardalion, pointing to me; "and you, sir, when you arrive there, ask for Mastridia Carpovna."

The boy said something in a hoarse voice, and we left the house.

We walked for a considerable time along the unpaved streets. At last, in one of them, perhaps the most desolate and miserable of all, my guide stopped before a wretched old wooden house, two stories high, and said, as he drew the sleeve of his dressing-gown right across his face, "It's here; the door on the right."

I entered the passage, and gave a push on the right hand. A small low door creaked on rusty hinges, and I saw before me a stout old woman in a cinnamon-coloured dress, lined with hare-skin, with a motley-coloured handkerchief upon her head.

"Mastridia Carpovna?" I asked.

"That's my name," replied the old woman in a shrill voice. "Please to come in; won't you take a chair?"

The room into which the old woman conducted me was so crammed with all sorts of rubbish—rags, pillows, feather-beds, bags—that one could hardly turn round in it. The sunlight scarcely pierced through the grimy windows. In one corner, behind a heap of baskets, piled one above the other, there feebly groaned and complained—one could not see what; perhaps a sick child—perhaps a puppy. I sat down on a chair; the old woman stood right in front of me. Her face was of a yellow tinge, and half transparent, as if made of wax. Her lips had so fallen in that her mouth looked like a single transverse wrinkle among a multitude of others. A tuft of white hair protruded from under the handkerchief which covered her head, but her inflamed grey eyes shot forth lively and intelligent glances from underneath her overhanging brow, and her sharp nose stood out from her face like an awl, and snuffed the air as much as to say, "What a rogue am I!" "Well, my old lady, you are no fool!" I thought to myself. As for the rest, she smelt a little of brandy.

I explained to her the cause of my visit, which however, as I remarked, must have been well-known to her already. She heard me to the end, rapidly winking her eyes, and merely seemed to prolong her nose and make it sharper, as if she were going to peck with it.

"Quite so—quite so," she at last began. Ardalion has told me all about it; you require the help of my son Vasily. Only, we are a little doubtful about it, my master."

"Why?" I asked, interrupting her. "As far as I am concerned you may be perfectly at your ease; I am not an informer."

"Oh, my father," hastily continued the old woman, "what is that you are saying! Could we venture to think of such a thing about

your honour? And, besides, what is there to inform against us about? Is it anything sinful we are contriving? My son is not such a man, my father, as to consent to any unclean thing, or to indulge in any kind of sorcery. May God preserve us, and the Holy Mother of God!" The old woman crossed herself three times. "For fasting and for prayer he occupies the first place in all the province—the very first, my father, your honour! But it is quite true that God has vouchsafed him great favour; but of what kind is it? This matter is not his own handiwork. This, my dear, comes from on high. Yes."

"Then you consent?" I asked. "When can I see your son?"

The old woman again winked her eyes, and twice shifted her handkerchief, rolled up into a ball, from one sleeve to another. "Oh, my dear sir, my dear sir, we are a little in doubt——"

"Allow me, Mastridia Carpovna, to hand this over to you," I said, giving her a ten-rouble note.

The old woman immediately grasped it in her crooked and swollen fingers, which reminded me of the fleshy claws of an owl, hid it away at once in her sleeve, reflected a little, and then, as if she had suddenly made up her mind, struck both her open hands upon her sides.

"Come here this evening at eight o'clock," she said, not speaking in her usual voice, but in another, a lower and a graver one; "only do not come to this room, but please to go straight upstairs to the second-floor; you will find a door there, on your left. Open that door, and you will enter into an empty room, and in that room you will see a chair; sit down on that chair and wait. And whatever you see, do nothing, and don't utter a single word; and be particularly careful not to speak to my son, because he is still young, and he is subject to epileptic fits. He is very easily frightened, and then he trembles—trembles just like a chicken—it's terrible!"

I looked at Mastridia. "You say he is young, but if he is your son——"

"Spiritually, father, spiritually! I have many orphans," she added, pointing by a movement of the head towards the corner from which came the complaining sound. "Oh, oh! Lord God, Holy Mother of God! But you, my father, your honour, before you come here, please to consider well, which of your dead friends or relations (the kingdom of Heaven be with them!) you wish to see. Think over your dead friends, and whichever you choose keep him well in mind; go on keeping him in mind until my son comes."

"But must not I tell your son who it is that I want to see?"

"No, no, father, not a single word. He will find out for himself by your thoughts whatever he wants to know; but you just keep your friend well in mind. Yes, and at dinner-time drink a little wine, two or three glasses or so; a little wine is never without its use."

The old woman laughed, licked her lips, wiped her mouth with the back of her hand, and sighed.

"Well, then, at half-past seven, isn't it?" I asked, rising from the chair.

"At half-past seven, father, your honour, at half-past seven," replied *Mastridia Carpovna*."

I took leave of the old woman and returned to the hotel. I had no doubt that they meant to make a fool of me, but in what manner would it be done? That was what I was curious about. I exchanged two or three words with *Ardalion*.

"Has she consented?" he asked me, knitting his brows; and when I replied that she had consented, he exclaimed, "That old woman is a regular minister."

I occupied myself, according to the advice of the "minister," in going carefully over the list of my dead friends. After considerable hesitation I at last fixed upon an old Frenchman, who was formerly my tutor, and who had been dead a long time. I pitched exactly upon him, not because I felt any specific predilection for him, but because his whole appearance was so original, so unlike that of such people as were in existence at the moment, that it would have been quite impossible to counterfeit it. He had a huge head, fuzzy white hair, combed back from his face, thick black eyebrows, a hooked nose, and two large lilac-coloured warts in the middle of his forehead. He always wore a green tailed coat with polished brass buttons, a striped waistcoat with a stand-up collar, and frills at his breast and wrists. "If he can show me my old *Deserre*," I thought, "well, then, I shall have to acknowledge that he really is a sorcerer."

After dinner, I followed the old woman's advice, and drank off a bottle of *Lafitte*, which was of the very first quality, according to *Ardalion's* asseverations, but which had a very strong taste of burnt cork, and left a thick sediment of logwood at the bottom of every glass.

Exactly at half-past seven, I found myself in front of the house in which I had talked with the respectable *Mastridia Carpovna*. All the window-shutters were closed, but the door was open. I entered the house, mounted the shaky staircase as far as the second-floor, opened the door on the left, and found myself, as the old woman had told me beforehand, in a tolerably large room, which was almost entirely empty. It was faintly lighted by a tallow candle which stood upon the window-sill; beside the wall, opposite the door, was a cane chair. I snuffed the candle, which had been standing there long enough for its wick to grow to a great head, sat down on the chair, and began to wait.

The first ten minutes went tolerably fast. There certainly was nothing in the room which could attract my attention, but I listened to every rustle—gazed attentively at the closed door. My heart beat fast. After the first ten minutes, another ten followed. Then half

an hour passed, three-quarters of an hour—but still not a thing stirred. I coughed several times in order to give notice that I was there. I began to grow bored, angry. I had never calculated upon being fooled in such a manner as that. At last I had just made up my mind to get up, take the candle, and go downstairs. I looked at it; the wick had again grown into a mushroom-like head; but happening to move my eyes from the window to the door, I suddenly started. Leaning against the door stood a man. So silently and so suddenly had he entered the room that I had heard nothing.

He wore a common blue coat; he was of middle height and tolerably stout. With bent head, and hands behind his back, he looked fixedly at me. By the feeble candle-light I could not see his features distinctly—all that I could make out was a shaggy mane of dishevelled hair falling over his forehead, and thick contorted lips and pale eyes. I was on the point of speaking to him, but I remembered Mastridia's order, and I held my tongue. He continued gazing at me—I gazed at him in return, and, strange to say, at that same moment I was conscious of something like fear, and, as if in obedience to some command, I involuntarily began to think about my old tutor. The man continued standing at the door, breathing hard, just as if he were climbing uphill, or were lifting a heavy load—but his eyes seemed to be enlarging—seemed to be coming nearer to me. Beneath their fixed and sinister regard I became more and more uncomfortable. At times those eyes glowed with an ominous internal fire—such a fire I have remarked in the eyes of a greyhound when it glares upon a hare—and like the greyhound he kept his eyes fixed on mine—following me whenever I made a turn—that is to say, tried to turn my eyes aside.

In this manner passed I know not how long—perhaps a minute, perhaps a quarter of an hour. He never ceased looking at me. I continued to feel a certain discomfort and fear, but I still went on thinking about my Frenchman. Two or three times I tried to say to myself, "What nonsense! What a farce!"—tried to smile, to shrug my shoulders; but in vain. All volition seemed to be suddenly congealed within me—I can find no other word. A sort of numbness had overpowered me. Suddenly I remarked that he had left the door—that he stood a pace or two nearer me. Then he made a sort of jump with both feet at once, and came still nearer. Then closer . . . closer still . . . but his threatening eyes were still fixed upon my face, his hands remaining behind his back, and his broad chest going on painfully heaving. Those little jumps seemed ludicrous to me, but at the same time I was conscious of fear, and, what I could not at all comprehend, a drowsiness suddenly began to come over me. My eyelids clung together. The shaggy face with the pale eyes and the blue coat became doubled before me. Then suddenly they disappeared entirely. I gave a start; the man again appeared, standing between me and the doorway, but

now much closer;—then he again disappeared, just as if a fog had closed around him. Once more he appeared, then disappeared again. Then again he appeared—and each time he was closer—closer; his breath, drawn heavily, almost in snorts, had already reached me. Again the fog closed in, and suddenly—out of that fog, beginning with white hair thrown backwards—there appeared, clearly defined, the head of the old Deserre! Yes; there were his warts, his black brows, his hooked nose! And there was the green coat with brass buttons, and the striped waistcoat, and the frilled shirt! I called out. I rose from the chair. . . . The old man vanished,—and in his stead I saw the man in the blue coat. He drew near to the side of the room, his whole frame shaking—leaned his head and both his hands against the wall, and cried in a hoarse voice, “Tea!”

Mastridia suddenly appeared, ran up to him, and saying, “Vasinka! Vasinka!” began carefully wiping away the sweat which poured profusely from his head and face. I was on the point of going up to her, but she exclaimed with such an appealing and affecting voice, “Don’t ruin us, your honour, kind father; do go away, for Christ’s sake!” that I obeyed, and she again turned to her son. “Dear one! Darling!” she said, in soothing accents, “you shall have tea immediately—immediately. And you too, my father,” she called after me, “have some tea when you get home!”

On my return home I followed Mastridia’s advice, and ordered tea. I felt weary and even faint.

“Well, sir?” asked Ardalion, “did you go? Have you seen anything?”

“He really did show me something which I must confess I had not expected,” I replied.

“A man of great wisdom!” remarked Ardalion as he brought in the tea-urn. “The merchants here show him immense respect!”

When I had retired to rest, and was reflecting over the adventure through which I had gone, I at last imagined that I had arrived at its explanation. That man undoubtedly possessed remarkable magnetic power, acting on my nerves by some means quite unintelligible to me. He had recalled to my mind the remembrance of the old man about whom I was thinking, in so clear, so vivid a manner, that at last I fancied that I actually saw him before my eyes. Science is familiar with such *metastases*, such transpositions of sensations. But as to the power which could produce such results, that remained just as wonderful and mysterious as before. “Whatever people may say,” I thought, “I have seen my dead tutor—seen him with my own eyes.”

On the following day came off the ball in the Nobles’ Assembly Rooms. Sophie’s father had paid me a visit, to remind me of my engagement with his daughter. By 10 o’clock that evening I was standing by her side in the middle of the hall, which was lighted by

a number of brass lamps, and was preparing to go through a quadrille to the thundering accompaniment of a military orchestra. There were crowds of people there—especially of ladies, and very pretty ones too. But the first place among them must undoubtedly have been conceded to my partner, if there had not been something strange, even somewhat wild, in the expression of her eyes. I remarked that their lids very seldom quivered in any way, and the look of unsuspecting candour that those eyes wore did not make up for their singular expression. But her figure was admirably proportioned, and she moved with grace, though timidly, as it were. When she waltzed, and, bending a little back, inclined her slender neck toward her right shoulder, as if she wished to keep her partner at a distance, it would have been impossible to imagine anything more touchingly youthful and pure. She was dressed entirely in white with a turquoise cross on a black ribbon.

I asked her to dance a mazurka, and tried to make her talk. But she spoke little, and that unwillingly, though she listened attentively, with that same expression of meditative astonishment which had struck me so much in my first interview with her. There was not a shadow of that coquetry about her which might have been expected in a girl of her age and of her looks, nor was there a trace of a smile about her lips; and her eyes remained constantly fixed straight upon the eyes of the person with whom she spoke—those eyes which seemed at the same time to be gazing at something else—to be attending to something else. "What a strange creature!" I thought. At last, not knowing how to interest her, the idea came into my mind to tell her about my last night's adventure.

She heard me to the end with evident curiosity, but, quite contrary to what I expected, she was not in the least astonished at my story, but only asked whether that man's name was not Vasily. I remembered that the old woman had called her son "Vasinka."

"Yes," I replied, "his name is Vasily. Do you know him?"

"A certain pious man lives here whose name is Vasily," she said; "I thought it must be he."

"Piety has nothing to do with all this," I remarked. "This is merely the result of magnetism—a result which is of interest to medical men and students of natural science."

I tried to unfold my opinions about that special force which is called magnetism—about the possibility of subjecting the will of one person to that of another, and so forth; but my explanations, which, to tell the truth, were somewhat hazy, did not seem to produce much impression on my partner. Sophie listened to me—her fan resting without movement in her crossed hands. She did not play with her fan; as a general rule, she seldom moved her fingers. I felt that all my words bounded off from her as if from a stone statue. She

understood them, but her own convictions evidently remained unshaken, and by no means to be uprooted.

"Surely you do not believe in the present existence of miracles?" I exclaimed.

"Certainly I do," she quietly replied. "How can one possibly help believing in it? Is it not said in the Gospel, that whoever has faith, even as a grain of mustard-seed, can remove mountains? If only we have faith, the miracles will take place."

"It seems, then, that very little faith has lasted till our times," I exclaimed. "Somehow or other one does not hear of miracles now."

"But still they take place—you yourself can vouch for that. No; faith has not ceased in our time, but the beginning of faith is——"

"The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord," I broke in.

"The beginning of faith," continued Sophie, not in the least put out, "is self-sacrifice, humiliation."

"Humiliation?" I asked.

"Yes; the pride of man's heart, haughtiness, arrogance—all this must be entirely rooted up. You have spoken about the will. That is the very thing we must tear up."

I looked at the face of the young girl who was uttering such strange words. "It is evidently no joking matter with this girl," I said to myself. Then I looked at our neighbours in the mazurka. They in their turn looked at me, and I fancied that my surprise amused them. One of them even smiled at me in a sympathising manner, as if intending to say, "Yes, indeed! what an extraordinary young lady this is! Every one here knows what she is like."

"So you have tried to break your will?" I began to say to Sophie.

"We are all bound to do what seems to us to be right," she replied, in a kind of dogmatic tone.

"Allow me to ask you," I recommenced, after a brief silence, "if you believe in the possibility of calling up the spirits of the dead?"

"There are no dead," she said.

"How so?"

"There are no dead souls; they are immortal, and can always appear when they wish. They are always around us."

"What! Do you suppose, for instance, that an immortal soul can be flying at this moment around that red-nosed major?"

"But why not? The sunlight falls upon him and his nose; but is not the sunlight, and all light, from God? And what is outward appearance? To the pure nothing is impure. Only one must find a teacher—find a guide."

"But, excuse me," I broke in—not, I must allow, without a certain amount of malice—"you want a guide; but what then is your confessor?"

Sophie looked at me coldly. "You seem to wish to laugh at me.

My father-confessor tells me how I should act ; but I want a guide who can show me in his own person how to sacrifice myself."

She raised her eyes aloft. Her childlike face and her unchanging pensiveness reminded me of the madonnas of Raphael's predecessors.

"I have read somewhere," she continued, without turning to me, and scarcely moving her lips, "that a certain great man ordered his body to be buried underneath the threshold of a church, in order that all who passed in might tread above him—trample upon him. That is what we ought to do while we are still alive."

Boom!—boom! Tra-ra-ra! resounded the kettle-drums in the orchestra. I must admit that such a conversation at a ball seemed to be too eccentric. I took advantage of an invitation made to my partner, during one of the figures of the mazurka, in order to drop our quasi-theological debate.

A quarter of an hour afterwards I led her back to her father, and a couple of days later I left the town, and the image of the girl, with her childlike face, and her hard, almost stony character, soon slid off from my memory.

Two years passed away, and chance recalled that image to my mind once more. This was how it happened. I was chatting with one of my colleagues, who had just returned from an excursion in South Russia. He had passed some time at T., and he gave me a good deal of information about different people there.

"By-the-way," he exclaimed, "I believe you know Vladimir B. intimately, don't you?"

"Oh! yes; I know him."

"And his daughter Sophie; do you know her too?"

"I have seen her two or three times."

"Just fancy! She has run away from home!"

"What?"

"Yes. It's three months now since she disappeared, and nothing has been heard of her. And the wonderful part of it is, that nobody can say with whom she has run away. Just conceive! there isn't the slightest clue to it—not an atom of suspicion! She has invariably refused all offers of marriage, and her behaviour was of the modestest kind. Oh! those quiet ones—those pious creatures! The scandal throughout the county is terrible. B. is in despair. And what need could she have had to run away? Her father always did everything she asked. And what is most incomprehensible, and most to the purpose too, is that of all the Lovelaces of the county not a single one is missing!"

"And do you mean to say they haven't found her up to this time?"

"Why, I tell you she's disappeared as much as if she'd dived under water. There's one rich heiress less in the world—that's the worst of it."

This piece of news greatly astonished me. It did not at all harmonize with the recollection I had retained of Sophie B. But what manner of thing is so strange as not to happen?

In the autumn of that same year, chance sent me once more, and again on official business, into a province adjacent to that of T. The weather was cold and wet. The exhausted post-horses could scarcely drag my light tarantasse along the roads, the black soil of which was almost in a fluid state. One day, I remember, turned out particularly unfortunate. Three times did my carriage stick fast, up to the axletrees in mud. Scarcely could my driver manage to get out of one track, and after much shouting and screeching, succeed in jolting over into another, in which, after all, we were no better off. In short, I was so thoroughly tired out by the evening, that when I had reached a post-station I determined to stop at the inn for the night. They gave me a small room, with a wooden sofa in it which had seen a good deal of service; the floor was uneven, the paper on the walls was ragged; the whole place smelt of matting, quass, onions, and turpentine; and there were swarms of flies everywhere. But, at all events, one was sheltered from the bad weather—and the rain was evidently prepared to go on for the next twenty-four hours. I told them to bring me a tea-urn, lay down on the sofa, and resigned myself to one of those cheerless roadside reveries which every traveller in Russia knows so well. It was interrupted by a loud knocking, which made itself heard in the common room of the inn, from which mine was separated by a wooden partition. This knocking was accompanied from time to time by a shrill chinking, like that produced by the rattling of chains, and suddenly a man's gruff voice exclaimed: "May God bless all who are in this house! May God bless! May God bless! Amen! Amen! . . . Get thee behind me, Satan!" repeated the voice; prolonging the last syllable of each word in a somewhat wild and incoherent manner. Then one heard a loud sigh, and a heavy body deposited itself on a bench, with the same rattle and chinking as before.

"Akulina! servant of God, come here!" recommenced the voice—"only look, bare and blessed are . . . Ha, ha, ha! Phoo! Lord God, Lord God, Lord God!"—drawled the voice, like that of a deacon reading in the choir—"Lord God, Lord of my being, look down upon my misery . . . Oh, ho-ho! ha-ha! Phoo. But may a blessing come upon this house in the seventh hour!"

"Who is that?" I inquired of the bustling landlady as she brought the urn into my room.

"That, my father," she answered in a hurried whisper, "is a godly man, a blessed man! It's only lately he has shown himself in our neighbourhood. Now he has deigned to visit our house. And what terrible weather it is he has come in! Why the wet is running off

him in streams, my dear. And if you could only see what chains he wears—it's terrible!"

"May God bless! May God bless!" again resounded the voice. "But Akulina! Akulinushka! my friend! Where then is our paradise, our beautiful paradise? In the desert is our paradise . . . paradise . . . But on this house, in the beginning of this time . . . may great joy . . . Oh . . . Oh . . . Oh!"

The voice muttered something unintelligible; and suddenly, after a protracted yawn, a hoarse laugh again was heard. That laugh seemed to break out as it were involuntarily, and after it, each time, was heard an indignant spitting.

"Oh, dear! what a pity it is that Stefanich isn't at home," said the landlady, apparently speaking to herself as she stood near the door, exhibiting all the signs of the deepest attention. "Whatever words of salvation he may utter, I, a mere woman, won't be able to understand them!" And she hastily left the room.

In the partition was a chink. I applied my eye to it. There sat on a bench, with his back turned towards me, an idiot. I could see only his huge shaggy head, and his broad high-shouldered back, under its covering of rags and patches, all soaking wet. Before him knelt, on the earthen floor, a meagre woman, dressed in a kind of overcoat, old and equally soaked through, and having on her head a dark handkerchief which came right down to her eyes. She was trying to pull the idiot's boots off his feet, but her fingers could not hold on to the muddy and slippery leather. The landlady stood behind her, with her arms folded across her breast, and looked with reverence upon the "holy man." As for him, he continued, as formerly, to mouth some kind of unintelligible words.

At last the woman in the overcoat succeeded in taking off his boots. In doing so she almost lost her balance; but she recovered herself, and proceeded to unwrap the idiot's leggings. On the instep of one of his feet there was a wound . . . I turned away.

"Won't you have some tea brought you, my own?" said the respectful voice of the landlady.

"What art thou thinking of?" replied the idiot. "To pamper a sinful body . . . Oh, oh! One ought to crush every bone in it . . . But she—talks about tea! Oh! oh! my worthy old woman, Satan is strong in us! On him descends cold, on him famine, on him fall the heavenly cataracts, the pouring, piercing rains; but he thinks nothing of it all; he goes on living! Remember the day of the intercession of the Mother of God. There will be something for thee—there will be much."

The landlady was so much astonished that she could not help uttering a slight cry.

"Only listen to me! Give away everything; give away thy shirt;

give away thy head! Even if thou art not asked, yet give! because God sees! Would it take long to rend this roof asunder? To thee the Benefactor has given corn; well, then, place it in the oven! But everything to Him is visible! Vi—si—ble! The eye in the triangle—whose is it? Say—whose?”

The hostess furtively crossed herself beneath her neckerchief.

“The old enemy; adamant! A—da—mant!” repeated the idiot several times with a gnashing of teeth. “The Old Serpent. But God will arise! Yea, God will arise and His enemies shall be scattered! I will call upon all the dead! I will go forth against His enemy! Ha, ha, ha! Phoo!”

“Have you any oil?” said a second scarcely audible voice. “Give me some to put upon the wound; I have a clean piece of rag.”

I looked through the chink again.

The woman in the overcoat was still occupied with the idiot’s wounded foot.

“Mary Magdalene!” I thought.

“Directly, directly, my dear,” said the landlady, who came into my room, and took a spoonful of oil from the lamp in front of the sacred picture.

“Who is it that is ministering to him?” I asked.

“But we don’t know, my father, who she is. No doubt it’s someone who is working out her salvation—working off her sins, perhaps. But what a holy man he is, to be sure!”

“Akulinushka! dear child! beloved daughter,” repeated the idiot; and then suddenly began to weep.

The woman, who was on her knees before him, looked up at him. Good God! where had I seen those eyes?

The landlady brought her the spoonful of oil. She finished her operation, rose from the floor, and asked whether there was not a clean spare room and a little hay to be had.

“Vasily Nikitich likes to repose on hay,” she added.

“Of course there is, at your service,” replied the landlady. “Pray dry yourself, rest yourself, my dear one,” she continued, addressing the idiot.

He groaned, and rose slowly from the bench. His chains again clinked, as he began signing himself with a cross on a large scale, turning his face in my direction, and lifting his eyes towards the holy pictures.

I recognised him directly. It was that same Vasily who once showed me my dead tutor!

His features had altered but little—only their expression had become still more extraordinary, still more startling. The lower part of his bloated face was overgrown by a dishevelled beard. Ragged, muddy, wild in aspect, he inspired me rather with loathing than with

fear. He gave up crossing himself, but he continued looking with unsettled glances, in which there was no speculation, along the floor and into the corners of the room, as if he were expecting something or other.

"Vasily Nikitich, if you please," said the woman in the overcoat, bowing down before him. He suddenly gave his head a shake, and turned round to go, but got his legs entangled, and staggered. His companion immediately made a hasty movement towards him, and supported him under the armpit. As far as one could judge by her voice and her figure, she seemed to be still young. To see her face was all but impossible.

"Akulinushka, my friend!" once more said the idiot, speaking with a kind of quiver in his voice; opening his mouth widely, and beating his breast with his fist. Then he groaned a hollow groan which seemed to be drawn up from the depths of his heart. And then the two companions followed the landlady out of the room.

I lay down on my hard couch, and for a long time reflected on what I had seen. My magnetizer had ended by becoming an idiot. That was what he had been brought to by that force, which, at all events, it was impossible to ignore in him!

The next morning I was preparing to recommence my journey. The rain went on falling as it had done the day before, but I could not waste any more time. As my servant poured out the water for me to wash with, a peculiar smile, suggestive of suppressed irony, played about his face. I understood that smile perfectly; it meant that he had heard of some foolish or indecorous proceeding on the part of some one belonging to the gentry. He was evidently burning with impatience to communicate the fact to me.

"Well, what is it?" at length I asked.

"Did you deign to see the idiot yesterday, sir?" he instantly began.

"Yes. What then?"

"And did you also see his companion, sir?"

"Yes; I saw her too."

"She is a young lady, sir, of noble birth."

"What?"

"It's a truth, sir, I'm telling you; some merchants came here yesterday from T. and recognised her. They even mentioned her name, only I've forgotten it, sir."

Everything was made clear for me in a moment, as if it had been by a flash of lightning.

"Is the idiot here still, or has he already gone away?" I asked.

"I don't think he's gone yet. He was sitting at the gate just now, doing something so strange that it was impossible even to make

anything of it. He goes on in this nonsensical way because he thrives on it—because he gets himself profit out of it.”

My man belonged to the same class of enlightened house-servants as Ardalion.

“And is the young lady with him?”

“Yes, sir; and waiting upon him.”

I went out to the steps, and caught sight of the idiot. He was sitting on the bench at the gate, and while he rested both his hands on it he swung his bent head right and left, exactly like a wild beast in a cage. His thick tufts of woolly hair hid his eyes and shook from side to side, as also did his hanging lips, from which escaped a strange murmuring, alien to almost every human sound.

His companion, who had just finished a wash in the bucket which hung from the peg by the well, and had not yet succeeded in tying her handkerchief over her head, was coming back to the gate along a narrow plank which crossed the dark pools of the dungyard. I looked at that head, now completely visible, and involuntarily struck my hands together in utter stupefaction . . . Before me stood Sophie B. ! She turned round quickly, and fixed on me her blue eyes, as motionless as ever. She had become very thin, her skin had grown coarse and had assumed the yellowish-red tint of a freckle, her nose had turned sharper, and the lines of her lips seemed to be drawn tighter. But still she had not quite lost her good looks; only to the expression of surprise and pondering which her face used to wear, there had been added another expression—a look of settled decision, almost of daring, and of a sort of concentrated rapture. Of the childlike appearance that face used to exhibit, not the slightest trace remained now.

I went up to her. “Sophie Vladimirovna,” I exclaimed, “can that be you? In that dress—in such company!”

She shuddered, looked still harder at me, as if she were trying to make out who was speaking to her, and then, without saying a word in reply, she ran up to her companion.

“Vasily Nikitich, let us go away directly! Listen! directly, directly!” she said, pulling her handkerchief down over her forehead with one hand, and seizing the idiot with the other below the elbow. “Let us go away, Vasily Nikitich. There is danger here.”

“I will go, my mother, I will go,” obediently replied the idiot, and then, bending forward with his whole body, he rose from the bench. “Only, you see, I must fasten my chains.”

I went up to Sophie again, again addressed her by her name, and implored her to listen to me, to give me at least one word in reply. I pointed to the rain which was pouring in torrents; I entreated her to think of her own health, of her companion’s health. I reminded her of her father. But a sort of evil merciless exaltation had got hold of her. Without paying me the slightest attention, with set teeth

and broken breathing, she urged on the bewildered idiot with brief words of command, spoken in a low voice; tied his girdle for him, fastened his chains, pressed down on his head a child's cap made of cloth, with a broken shade, put his stick into his hand, flung a wallet over her shoulders, and went away with him, out of the gate into the street. . . To stop her I had no right, and to have done so would have been of no good. She did not even look round at my last despairing cry after her. Supporting the "holy man" by the hand, she hurriedly tramped along through the black mud of the street, and in a few minutes, by the dim half-light of the foggy morning, through the close network of the pouring rain, I caught my last indistinct glimpse of the two figures, the idiot and Sophie . . . They turned the corner of a projecting cottage, and disappeared for ever.

I went back to my room, and gave myself up to my thoughts. I could not make out how a girl who was young and rich, and who had been well brought up, could fling aside every one and everything—her home, her family, her friends—could bid farewell to all the ordinary customs, all the comforts of life; and for what? Why, to go about with a half-mad vagabond, to make herself his drudge! Not for a single moment could one admit the idea that the motive for such a decision was a sincere, though depraved, liking, love, or passion . . . One had only to look at the repulsive face of the "holy man," in order to discard such an idea from one's mind at once. No; Sophie had remained pure, and for her, as she had once told me, nothing was impure. I could not understand this proceeding of Sophie's, but I did not condemn her. I could not but grieve that she should have chosen such a path as that, but to refuse to admire her—I will say more—to respect her, that I could not do. Not for nothing had she spoken to me of the abnegation, of the annihilation of self. With her, words were not at odds with deeds. She had sought a teacher and a guide—and she had found him . . . But, good God! in whom?

Yes, she had forced the world to pass over her, to tread her under foot!

* * * * *

In the course of time, I heard it stated that her family had at last succeeded in discovering the lost sheep and in bringing her home. But at home she lived not long, and died "a silent one," without having spoken a single word to any one.

Peace to thy soul, strange unhappy being! As to Vasily Nikitich, he is probably roaming about to this day, a vagabond idiot. The iron health of such people is really wonderful. But perhaps his epilepsy has carried him off.

The Invisible Ene.

By MM. ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN.

I.

IT WAS about this time, said Christian, poor as a church rat, I had taken shelter in the roof-loft of an old house in the rue des Minnesängers, at Nuremberg.

I had nestled myself in an angle of the roof. The slates served me for walls, and the roof-tree for a ceiling: I had to walk over my straw mattress to reach the window; but this window commanded a magnificent view, for it overlooked both city and country beyond. From it I watched cats gravely walking along the gutter, storks with beak-loads of frogs, carrying food to their devouring young ones; pigeons with their tails spread fan-like, whirling above the depths of the streets below.

In the evening, when the church-bells called the people to the *Angelus*, resting my elbows on the edge of the roof, I listened to their melancholy song, and watched the windows lit up one by one; the good townsmen, smoking their pipes on the pavement; the young girls, in short red petticoats, and with their pitchers under their arms, laughing and chatting about the fountain of Saint Sébalt. Insensibly all these objects faded from my view; the bats came abroad in the dim air, and I lay me down to sleep in the midst of the soft quietude.

The old second-hand dealer, Toubec, knew the road up to my little den as well as I knew it myself, and was not afraid of climbing the ladder. Every week his goat's head, surmounted by a rusty wig, pushed up the trap-door, his fingers clutched the edge of the floor, and in a noisy tone he cried:

"Well, well, Master Christian, have we anything new?"

To which I answered:

"Come in: why the deuce don't you come in? I'm just finishing a little landscape, and want to have your opinion of it."

Then his long thin spine lengthened itself out, until his head touched the roof; and the old fellow laughed silently.

I must do justice to Toubec: he never bargained with me. He bought all my pictures at 15 florins apiece, one with the other, and sold them again at 40. He was an honest Jew.

This kind of existence was beginning to please me, and I was every day finding in it some new charm, when the good city of Nuremberg was agitated by a strange and mysterious event.

Not far from my garret-window, a little to the left, rose the *auberge* of the *Bœuf-gras*, an old public-house much frequented by the country-people. Three or four waggons, loaded with sacks or casks, were always standing before its doors; for before going to market, the countrymen used to take their nip of wine there.

The gable of this *auberge* was conspicuous for the peculiarity of its form: it was very narrow, sharply pointed, and its edges were cut like the teeth of a saw; grotesque carvings ornamented the cornices and framework of its windows. But what was most remarkable was that the house which faced it reproduced exactly the same carvings and ornaments; every detail had been minutely copied, even to the support of the signboard, with its iron volutes and spirals.

It might have been said that these two ancient buildings reflected one another; only that, behind the *auberge*, grew a tall oak, the dark foliage of which served to bring into bold relief the forms of the roof, while the neighbouring house stood bare against the sky. For the rest, the *auberge* was as noisy and animated as the other house was silent. On the one side was to be seen, going in and coming out, an endless crowd of drinkers, singing, stumbling, cracking their whips; over the other, solitude reigned.

Once or twice a day, at most, the heavy door of the silent house opened to give egress to a little old woman, her back bent into a half-circle, her chin long and pointed, her dress clinging to her limbs, an enormous basket under her arm, and one hand tightly clutched upon her chest.

The physiognomy of this old woman had struck me more than once; her little green eyes, her skinny pinched-up nose, the large flower-pattern on her shawl, dating back a hundred years. at least, the smile that wrinkled her cheeks till they looked like two cockades, and the lace trimming of her bonnet hanging down upon her eyebrows,—all this appeared to me strange, interested me, and made me strongly desire to learn who this old woman was, and what she did in her great lonely house.

I had imagined her as passing there an existence of good works and pious meditation. But one day, when I had stopped in the street to look at her, she turned sharply round and darted at me a look, the horrible expression of which I know not how to describe, and made three or four hideous grimaces at me; then dropping again her doddering head, she drew her large shawl about her, the ends of which trailed after her on the ground, and slowly entered her heavy door, behind which I saw her disappear.

"That's an old mad-woman," I said to myself; "a malicious cunning old mad-woman! I ought not to have allowed myself to be so interested in her. But I'll try and recall her abominable grimace—Toubec will give me 15 florins for it willingly."

This way of treating the matter was far from satisfying my mind, however. The old woman's horrible glance pursued me everywhere; and more than once, while scaling the perpendicular ladder of my lodging-hole, feeling my clothes caught in a nail, I trembled from head to foot, believing that the old woman had seized me by the tails of my coat for the purpose of pulling me down backwards.

Toubac, to whom I related the story, far from laughing at it, received it with a serious air.

"Master Christian," he said, "if the old woman means you harm, take care; her teeth are small, sharp-pointed, and wonderfully white, which is not natural at her age. She has the Evil Eye! Children run away at her approach, and the people of Nuremberg call her *Flödermausse*!"*

I admired, generally, the Jew's clear-sightedness, and what he had told me made me reflect a good deal; but at the end of a few weeks, having often met *Flödermausse* without harmful consequences, my fears died away and I thought no more of her.

Now, it happened one night, when I was lying sound asleep, I was awaked by a strange harmony. It was a kind of vibration, so soft, so melodious, that the murmur of a light breeze through foliage can convey but a feeble idea of its gentle nature. For a long time I listened to it, my eyes wide open, and holding my breath the better to hear it.

At length, looking towards the window, I saw two wings beating against the glass. I thought, at first, that it was a bat imprisoned in my chamber; but the moon was shining clearly, and the wings of a magnificent night-moth, transparent as lace, were designed upon its radiant disc. At times their vibrations were so rapid as to hide them from my view; then, for awhile they would lie in repose, extended on the glass pane, their delicate articulations made visible anew.

This vaporous apparition in the midst of the universal silence, opened my heart to the tenderest emotions; it seemed to me that a sylphid, pitying my solitude, had come to see me; and this idea brought the tears into my eyes.

"Have no fear, gentle captive,—have no fear!" I said to it; "your confidence shall not be betrayed. I will not retain you against your wishes; return to heaven—to liberty!"

And I opened the window.

The night was calm. Thousands of stars glittered in space. For a moment I contemplated this sublime spectacle, and the words of prayer rose naturally to my lips. But judge of my amazement when, lowering my eyes, I saw a man hanging from the iron stanchion supporting the signboard of the *Bœuf-gras*; the hair in disorder, the arms stiff, the

* Flitter-mouse, bat.

legs straightened to a point, and throwing their gigantic shadow the whole length of the street!

The immobility of this figure, in the moonlight, had something frightful in it. I felt my tongue grow icy cold, and my teeth chattered. I was about to utter a cry; but, by what mysterious attraction I know not, my eyes were drawn towards the opposite house, and there I dimly distinguished the old woman, in the midst of the heavy shadow, squatting at her window and contemplating the hanging body with diabolical satisfaction.

I became giddy with terror; my whole strength deserted me, and I fell down in a heap insensible.

I do not know how long I lay unconscious. On coming to myself I found that it was broad day. The mists of night, entering my garret, had dropped their fresh moisture on my hair. Mingled and confused noises rose from the street below. I looked out from my window.

The burgomaster and his secretary were standing at the door of the *Bœuf-gras*; they remained there a long time. People came and went, stopped to look, then passed on their way. Women of the neighbourhood, sweeping in front of their houses, looked from a distance towards the public-house and chatted with each other. At length a stretcher, on which lay a body covered with a woollen cloth, was brought out of the *auberge* and carried away by two men, who passed down the street, children, on their way to school, following them as they went.

Everybody else retired.

The window in front of the house remained open still; a fragment of rope dangled from the iron support of the signboard. I had not dreamed—I had really seen the night-moth on my window-pane—then the suspended body—then the old woman!

In the course of that day Toubec paid me his weekly visit.

"Anything to sell, Master Christian?" he cried, as his big nose became visible above the edge of the floor, which it seemed to shave.

I did not hear him. I was seated on my only chair, my hands upon my knees, my eyes fixed on vacancy before me. Toubac, surprised at my immobility, repeated in a louder tone, "Master Christian!—Master Christian!" then, stepping up to me, tapped me smartly on the shoulder.

"What's the matter?—what's the matter?" he asked.

"Ah! is that you, Toubec?"

"Well, it's pleasant for me to think so! Are you ill?"

"No,—I was thinking."

"What the deuce about?"

"The man who was hung——"

"Aha!" cried the old broker; "you saw the poor fellow, then? What a strange affair! The third in the same place!"

“The third?”

“Yes, the third. I ought to have told you about it before; but there’s still time—for there’s sure to be a fourth, following the example of the others, the first step only making the difficulty.”

This said, Toubec seated himself on a box, struck a light with the flint and steel, lit his pipe and sent out a few puffs of tobacco-smoke with a thoughtful air.

“Good faith!” said he, “I’m not timid; but if anyone were to ask me to sleep in that room, I’d rather go and hang myself somewhere else! Nine or ten months back,” he continued, “a wholesale furrier, from Tübingen, put up at the *Bœuf-gras*. He called for supper; ate well, drank well, and was shown up to bed in the room on the third floor they call the “green chamber;” and the next day they found him hanging from the stanchion of the signboard.”

“So much for number one, about which there was nothing to be said. A proper report of the affair was drawn up, and the body of the stranger was buried at the bottom of the garden. But about six weeks afterwards came a soldier from Neustadt; he had his discharge, and was congratulating himself on his return to his village. All the evening he did nothing but empty mugs of wine and talk of his cousin, who was waiting his return to marry him. At last they put him to bed in the green chamber, and, the same night, the watchman passing along the rue des Minnesängers noticed something hanging from the signboard-stanchion. He raised his lantern; it was the soldier, with his discharge-papers in a tin box hanging on his left thigh, and his hands planted smoothly on the outer seams of his trousers, as if he had been on parade!

“It was certainly an extraordinary affair! The burgomaster declared it was the work of the devil. The chamber was examined; they replastered its walls. A notice of the death was sent to Neustadt, in the margin of which the clerk wrote—‘Died suddenly of apoplexy.’

“All Nuremberg was indignant against the landlord of the *Bœuf-gras*, and wished to compel him to take down the iron stanchion of his signboard, on the pretext that it put dangerous ideas in peoples’ heads. But you may easily imagine that old Nickel Schmidt didn’t listen with that ear.

“‘That stanchion was put there by my grandfather,’ he said; ‘the sign of the *Bœuf-gras* has hung on it, from father to son, for a hundred and fifty years; it does nobody any harm, not even the hay-carts that pass under it, because it’s more than thirty feet high up; those who don’t like it have only to look another way, and then they won’t see it.’

“People’s excitement gradually cooled down, and for several months nothing new happened. Unfortunately, a student of Heidelberg, on

his way to the University, came to the *Bœuf-gras* and asked for a bed. He was the son of a pastor.

"Who could suppose that the son of a pastor would take into his head the idea of hanging himself to the stanchion of a public-house sign, because a furrier and a soldier had hung themselves there before him? It must be confessed, Master Christian, that the thing was not very probable—it would not have appeared more likely to you than it did to me. Well——"

"Enough! enough!" I cried; "it is a horrible affair. I feel sure there is some frightful mystery at the bottom of it. It is neither the stanchion nor the chamber——"

"You don't mean that you suspect the landlord?—as honest a man as there is in the world, and belonging to one of the oldest families in Nuremberg?"

"No, no! heaven keep me from forming unjust suspicions of any one; but there are abysses into the depths of which one dares not look."

"You are right," said Toubec, astonished at my excited manner; "and we had much better talk of something else. By-the-by, Master Christian, "what about our landscape, the view of the Sainte-Odille?"

The question brought me back to actualities. I showed the broker the picture I had just finished. The business was soon settled between us, and Toubec, thoroughly satisfied, went down the ladder, advising me to think no more of the student of Heidelberg.

I would very willingly have followed the old broker's advice, but when the devil mixes himself in our affairs he is not easily shaken off.

II.

IN the midst of solitude, all these events came back to my mind with frightful distinctness.

The old woman, I said to myself, is the cause of all this; she alone has planned these crimes, she alone has carried them into execution; but by what means? Has she had recourse to cunning only, or really to the intervention of the invisible powers?

I paced my garret, a voice within me crying, "It is not without purpose that Heaven has permitted you to see Flédermausse watching the agony of her victim; it was not without design that the poor young man's soul came to wake you in the form of a night-moth! No! all this has not been without purpose. Christian, Heaven imposes on you a terrible mission; if you fail to accomplish it, fear yourself that you may fall into the toils of the old woman! Perhaps at this moment she is laying her snares for you in the darkness!"

During several days these frightful images pursued me without

cessation. I could not sleep; I found it impossible to work; the brush fell from my hand, and, shocking to confess, I detected myself at times complacently contemplating the dreadful stanchion. At last, one evening, unable any longer to bear this state of mind, I flew down the ladder four steps at a time, and went and hid myself beside Flédermausse's door, for the purpose of discovering her fatal secret.

From that time there was never a day that I was not on the watch, following the old woman like her shadow, never losing sight of her; but she was so cunning, she had so keen a scent, that without even turning her head she discovered that I was behind her, and knew that I was on her track. But nevertheless, she pretended not to see me—went to the market, to the butcher's, like a simple housewife; only she quickened her pace and muttered to herself as she went.

At the end of a month I saw that it would be impossible for me to achieve my purpose by these means, and this conviction filled me with an inexpressible sadness.

"What can I do?" I asked myself. "The old woman has discovered my intentions, and is thoroughly on her guard. I am helpless. The old wretch already thinks she sees me at the end of the cord!"

At length, from repeating to myself again and again the question, "What can I do?" a luminous idea presented itself to my mind.

My chamber overlooked the house of Flédermausse, but it had no dormer window on that side. I carefully raised one of the slates of my roof, and the delight I felt on discovering that by this means I could command a view of the entire antique building can hardly be imagined.

"At last I've got you!" I cried to myself; "you cannot escape me now! From here I shall see everything—the goings and comings, the habits of the weazel in her hole! You will not suspect this invisible eye—this eye that will surprise the crime at the moment of its inception! Oh, Justice! it moves slowly, but it comes!"

Nothing more sinister than this den could be looked on—a large yard, paved with moss-grown flagstones; a well in one corner, the stagnant water of which was frightful to behold; a wooden staircase leading up to a railed gallery, from the balustrade of which hung the tick of an old mattress; to the left, on the first floor, a drain-stone indicated the kitchen; to the right, the upper windows of the house looked into the street. All was dark, decaying, and dank-looking.

The sun penetrated only for an hour or two during the day the depths of this dismal sty; then the shadows again spread over it—the light fell in lozenge shapes upon the crumbling walls, on the mouldy balcony, on the dull windows. Clouds of motes danced in the golden rays that not a motion of the air came to disturb.

Oh, the whole place was worthy of its mistress!

I had hardly made these reflections when the old woman entered the yard on her return from market. First, I heard her heavy door grate on its hinges, then Flédermausse, with her basket, appeared. She seemed fatigued—out of breath. The border of her bonnet hung down upon her nose as, clutching the wooden rail with one hand, she mounted the stairs.

The heat was suffocating. It was exactly one of those days when insects of every kind—the crickets, the spiders, and the mosquitoes—fill old buildings with their grating noises and subterranean borings.

Flédermausse crossed the gallery slowly, like a ferret that feels itself at home. For more than a quarter of an hour she remained in the kitchen, then came out and turned her mattress-tick, swept the stones a little, on which a few straws had been scattered; at last she raised her head, and with her green eyes carefully scrutinised every portion of the roof from which I was observing her.

By what strange intuition did she suspect anything? I know not; but I gently lowered the uplifted slate into its place, and gave over watching for the rest of that day.

The day following Flédermausse appeared to be reassured. A jagged ray of light fell into the gallery; passing this, she caught a fly, and delicately presented it to a spider established in an angle of the roof.

The spider was so large that, in spite of the distance, I saw it descend round by round of its ladder, then, gliding along one thread, like a drop of venom, seize its prey from the fingers of the dreadful old woman, and remount rapidly. Flédermausse watched it attentively; then her eyes half-closed, she sneezed, and cried to herself in a jocular tone:

“Bless you, beauty!—bless you!”

For six weeks I could discover nothing as to the power of Flédermausse: sometimes I saw her peeling potatoes, sometimes spreading her linen on the balustrade. Sometimes I saw her spin; but she never sang, as old women usually do, their quivering voices going so well with the humming of their spinning-wheel. Silence reigned about her. She had no cat—the favourite company of old maids; not a sparrow ever flew down into her yard; in passing over which the pigeons seemed to hurry their flight. It was as if everything was afraid of her look.

The spider alone took pleasure in her society.

I now look back with wonder at my patience during those long hours of observation; nothing escaped my attention, nothing was indifferent to me; at the least sound I lifted my slate. Mine was a boundless curiosity stimulated by an indefinable fear.

Toubec complained.

“What the devil are you doing with your time, Master Christian?”

he would say to me. "Formerly, you had something ready for me every week; now, hardly once in a month. Oh, you painters! people may well say, 'Idle as a painter!' As soon as they have a few krentzer before them, they put their hands in their pockets and go to sleep!"

I myself was beginning to lose courage. With all my watching and spying, I had discovered nothing extraordinary. I was inclining to think that the old woman might not be so dangerous after all—that I had been wrong, perhaps, to suspect her. In short, I tried to find excuses for her. But one fine evening while, with my eye to the opening in the roof, I was giving myself up to these charitable reflections, the scene abruptly changed.

Flédermausse passed along her gallery with the swiftness of a flash of light. She was no longer herself: she was erect, her jaws knit, her look fixed, her neck extended; she moved with long strides, her grey hair streaming behind her.

"Oh, oh!" I said to myself, "something is going on—attention!"

But the shadows of night descended on the big house, the noises of the town died out, and all became silent. I was about to seek my bed when, happening to look out of my skylight, I saw a light in the window of the green chamber of the *Bœuf-gras*—a traveller was occupying that terrible room!

All my fears were instantly revived. The old woman's excitement explained itself—she scented another victim!

I could not sleep at all that night. The rustling of the straw of my mattress, the nibbling of a mouse under the floor, sent a chill through me. I rose and looked out of my window—I listened. The light I had seen was no longer visible in the green chamber.

During one of these moments of poignant anxiety—whether the result of illusion or of reality—I fancied I could discern the figure of the old witch, likewise watching and listening.

The night passed, the dawn showed grey against my window-panes, and, slowly increasing, the sounds and movements of the re-awakened town arose. Harassed with fatigue and emotion, I at last fell asleep; but my repose was of short duration, and by eight o'clock I was again at my post of observation.

It appeared that Flédermausse had passed a night no less stormy than mine had been; for, when she opened the door of the gallery I saw that a livid pallor was upon her cheeks and skinny neck. She had nothing on but her chemise and a flannel petticoat; a few locks of rusty grey hair fell upon her shoulders. She looked up musingly towards my garret; but she saw nothing—she was thinking of something else.

Suddenly she descended into the yard, leaving her shoes at the top of the stairs. Doubtless her object was to assure herself that the outer door was securely fastened. She then hurried up the stairs, taking

three or four steps at a time. It was frightful to see! She rushed into one of the side rooms, and I heard the sound of a heavy box-lid fall. Then Flédermausse reappeared in the gallery, dragging with her a lay-figure the size of life—and this figure was dressed like the unfortunate student of Heidelberg!

With surprising dexterity the old woman suspended this hideous object to a beam of the over-hanging roof, then went down into the yard, to contemplate it from that point of view. A peal of grating laughter broke from her lips—she hurried up the stairs, and rushed down again, like a maniac; and every time she did this she burst into new fits of laughter.

A sound was heard by the outer door; the old woman sprang to the figure, snatched it from its fastening, and carried it into the house; then she reappeared and leant over the balcony, with outstretched neck, glittering eyes, and eagerly-listening ears. The sound passed away—the muscles of her face relaxed, she drew a long breath. The passing of a vehicle had alarmed the old witch.

She then, once more, went back into her chamber, and I heard the lid of the box close heavily.

This strange scene utterly confounded all my ideas. What could that lay-figure mean?

I became more watchful and attentive than ever. Flédermausse went out with her basket, and I watched her to the top of the street; she had resumed her air of tottering agedness, walking with short steps, and from time to time half-turning her head, so as to enable herself to look behind out of the corner of her eyes. For five long hours she remained abroad, while I went and came from my spying-place incessantly, meditating all the while—the sun heating the slates above my head till my brain was almost scorched.

I saw at his window the traveller who occupied the green chamber at the *Bœuf-gras*; he was a peasant of Nassau, wearing a three-cornered hat, a scarlet waistcoat, and having a broad laughing countenance. He was tranquilly smoking his Ulm pipe, and unsuspecting anything. I felt impelled to call out to him, "My good fellow, be on your guard! Don't let yourself be fascinated by the old woman!—don't trust yourself!" But he could not have understood a word of what I had said to him, even if he had heard me.

About two o'clock Flédermausse came back. The sound of her door opening echoed to the end of the passage. Presently she appeared alone, quite alone, in the yard, and seated herself on the lowest step of the gallery-stairs. She placed her basket at her feet and drew from it, first several bunches of herbs, then some vegetables—then a three-cornered hat, a scarlet velvet waistcoat, a pair of plush breeches, and a pair of thick worsted stockings—the complete costume of a peasant of Nassau!

I reeled with giddiness—flames passed before my eyes.

I remembered those precipices that drew one towards them with irresistible power—wells that have had to be filled up because of persons throwing themselves into them—trees that have had to be cut down because of people hanging themselves upon them—the contagion of suicide and theft and murder, which at various times has taken possession of people's minds, by means well understood; that strange inducement, for example, which makes people yawn because they see others yawn—kill themselves because others kill themselves. My hair rose upon my head with horror!

But how could this Flédermausse—a creature so mean and wretched—have made discovery of so profound a law of nature? How had she found the means of turning it to the use of her sanguinary instincts? This I could neither understand nor imagine. Without more reflection, however, I resolved to turn the fatal law against her, and by its power to drag her into her own snare. So many innocent victims called for vengeance!

I began at once. I hurried to all the old clothes-dealers in Nuremberg; and by the evening I arrived at the *Bœuf-gras*, with an enormous parcel under my arm.

Nikel Schmidt had long known me. I had painted the portrait of his wife, a fat and comely dame.

“What!—Master Christian!” he cried, shaking me by the hand, “to what happy circumstance do I owe the pleasure of this visit?”

“My dear Mr. Schmidt, I feel a very strong desire to pass the night in that room of yours up yonder.”

We were on the doorstep of the *auberge*, and I pointed up to the green chamber. The good fellow looked suspiciously at me.

“Oh! don't be afraid,” I said, “I've no desire to hang myself.”

“I'm glad of it! I'm glad of it! for, frankly, I should be sorry—an artist of your talent. When do you want the room, Master Christian?”

“To-night.”

“That's impossible—it's occupied.”

“The gentleman can have it at once, if he likes,” said a voice behind us; “I shan't stay in it.”

We turned in surprise. It was the peasant of Nassau; his large three-cornered hat pressed down upon the back of his neck, and his bundle at the end of his travelling-stick. He had learned the story of the three travellers who had hung themselves.

“Such chambers!” he cried, stammering with terror; “it's—it's murdering people to put them into such!—you—you deserve to be sent to the galleys!”

“Come, come, calm yourself,” said the landlord; “you slept there comfortably enough last night.”

"Thank heaven! I said my prayers before going to rest, or where should I be now?—where should I be now?"

And he hurried away, raising his hands to heaven.

"Well," said Master Schmidt, stupified, "the chamber is empty, but don't go into it to do me an ill-turn."

"I should be doing myself a much worse one," I replied.

Giving my parcel to the servant-girl, I went and seated myself provisionally among the guests who were drinking and smoking.

For a long time I had not felt more calm, more happy to be in the world. After so many inquietudes, I was approaching my end—the horizon seemed to grow lighter. I know not by what formidable power I was being led on. I lit my pipe, and with my elbow on the table and a jug of wine before me, listened to the hunting-chorus from 'Der Freischütz,' played by a band of *Zigeuners* from Schwartz-Wald. The trumpet, the hunting-horn, the hautbois, turn by turn plunged me into vague reverie; and sometimes rousing myself to look at the old woman's house, I seriously asked myself whether all that had happened to me was more than a dream. But when the watchman came, to request us to vacate the room, graver thoughts took possession of my mind, and I followed, in meditative mood, the little servant-girl who preceded me with a candle in her hand.

III.

WE mounted the winding flight of stairs to the third story; arrived there, she placed the candle in my hand, and pointed to a door.

"That's it," she said, and hurried back down the stairs as fast as she could go.

I opened the door. The green chamber was like all other inn-bedchambers; the ceiling was low, the bed was high. After casting a glance round the room, I stepped across to the window.

Nothing was yet noticeable in Flédermausse's house, with the exception of a light, which shone at the back of a deep obscure bed-chamber,—a nightlight, doubtless.

"So much the better," I said to myself, as I reclosed the window curtains; "I shall have plenty of time."

I opened my parcel, and from its contents put on a woman's cap with a broad frilled border; then, with a piece of pointed charcoal, in front of the glass, I marked my forehead with a number of wrinkles. This took me a full hour to do; but after I had put on a gown and a large shawl, I was afraid of myself: Flédermausse herself was looking at me from the depths of the glass!

At that moment the watchman announced the hour of eleven. I rapidly dressed the lay-figure I had brought with me like the one prepared by the old witch. I then drew apart the window curtains.

Certainly, after all I had seen of the old woman—her infernal cunning, her prudence, and her address—nothing ought to have surprised even me ; yet I was positively terrified.

The light, which I had observed at the back of her room, now cast its yellow rays on her lay-figure, dressed like the peasant of Nassau, which sat huddled up on the side of the bed, its head dropped upon its chest, the large three-cornered hat drawn down over its features, its arms pendent by its sides, and its whole attitude that of a person plunged in despair.

Managed with diabolical art, the shadow permitted only a general view of the figure, the red waistcoat and its six rounded buttons alone caught the light ; but the silence of night, the complete immobility of the figure, and its air of terrible dejection, all served to impress the beholder with irresistible force ; even I myself, though not in the least taken by surprise, felt chilled to the centre of my bones. How would it have been, then, with a poor countryman taken completely off his guard ? He would have been utterly overthrown ; he would have lost all control of will, and the spirit of imitation would have done the rest.

Scarcely had I drawn aside the curtains than I discovered Flédermausse on the watch behind her window-panes.

She could not see me. I opened the window softly, the window over the way softly opened too ; then the lay-figure appeared to rise slowly and advance towards me ; I did the same, and seizing my candle with one hand, with the other threw the casement wide open.

The old woman and I were face to face ; for, overwhelmed with astonishment, she had let the lay-figure fall from her hands. Our two looks crossed with an equal terror.

She stretched forth a finger, I did the same ; her lips moved, I moved mine ; she heaved a deep sigh and leant upon her elbow, I rested in the same way.

How frightful the enacting of this scene was I cannot describe ; it was made up of delirium, bewilderment, madness. It was a struggle between two wills, two intelligences, two souls, one of which sought to crush the other ; and in this struggle I had the advantage. The dead struggled with me.

After having for some seconds imitated all the movements of Flédermausse, I drew a cord from the folds of my petticoat and tied it to the iron stanchion of the signboard.

The old woman watched me with open mouth. I passed the cord round my neck. Her tawny eyeballs glittered ; her features became convulsed :

“ No, no ! ” she cried, in a hissing tone ; “ No ! ”

I proceeded with the impassibility of a hangman.

The Flédermausse was seized with rage.

"You're mad ! you're mad !" she cried, springing up and clutching wildly at the sill of the window ; " You're mad !"

I gave her no time to continue. Suddenly blowing out my light, I stooped like a man preparing to make a vigorous spring, then seizing my lay-figure, slipped the cord about its neck and hurled it into the air.

A terrible shriek resounded through the street, and then all was silent again.

Perspiration bathed my forehead. I listened a long time. At the end of a quarter of an hour I heard far off—very far off—the cry of the watchman, announcing to the inhabitants of Nuremberg that midnight had struck.

"Justice is at last done," I murmured to myself ; " the three victims are avenged. Heaven forgive me !"

This was five minutes after I had heard the last cry of the watchman, and when I had seen the old witch, drawn by the likeness of herself, a cord about her neck, hanging from the iron stanchion projecting from her house, I saw the thrill of death run through her limbs, and the moon, calm and silent, rose above the edge of the roof, and threw upon her dishevelled head its cold pale rays.

As I had seen the poor young student of Heidelberg, I now saw Flödermausse.

The next day all Nuremberg knew that " the Bat " had hung herself. It was the last event of the kind in the rue des Minnesängers.

A Ghostly Night at Ballysloughter.

By JOHN SHEEHAN.

IN the west, far down, adjoining the City of Galway, and washed by the blue waters of the far-famed Bay, stands the picturesque and piscatorial village of Claddagh. Less renowned and frequented than its antiquity-boasting and more important neighbour, it is Claddagh's own fault, according to the prevailing opinion of its leading inhabitants for centuries, that it neither is nor ever has been the capital of the county. Had its people been less Spartan in their principles, and kept obtrusive wealth, with its train of artificial splendour, refinement, and luxury, less at arm's-length; had they been less honest and simple, and clung with less pride and pertinacity to the ways of their ancestors, there is no saying to what pitch of earthly greatness and renown they might have long since arrived. But they would marry amongst themselves; and would not even allow a stranger to dwell within their exclusive circle of thatch. Scorning to appeal to the laws of England, although submitting to her power, they have a Mayor of their own electing who rules them like children with a mild patriarchal sway, settling all their fishery disputes, and every other dispute and difference that may spring up between them, without an appeal being ever made from his decisions.* They stick to their straw-covered cabins religiously, rejecting the upstart idea of tiled or slated roofs, or of adding another story to their dwellings. If at any time any of the blue-mantled and red-kirtled mothers of this singular colony gave birth to a Hausmann, a Cubitt, or a Dargan, he lived his time notwithstanding, and laid "his head upon the lap of earth" in his country churchyard, like the "mute inglorious Milton" of the poet, without ever having opened his lips on any subject of architectural interest or importance whatsoever. If he had, so great was the prestige of mud and straw, even within hail of the Cunnemara quarries, he probably would not have been listened to; and if listened to, the chances are, that, engaged as Claddagh was, much more upon the spoils of ocean than "the spoils of time," he would not have been understood.

Say what you will to them, the people of Claddagh will always maintain that their ancestors could have entered in the race against Galway at any time, and won in a canter.

* His decisions are so decisive and so much respected that the parties are seldom known to carry their differences before a legal tribunal, or to trouble the civil magistrates.—Hardiman's *History of Galway*.

This is not precisely the writer's opinion; and most probably the reader will look upon such an opinion as altogether inexact. It is stoutly maintained, however, by a worthy and irrepressible oracle on Irish history and antiquities, living at present, and long may he continue to live, as he says himself, "with the help of the Lord and his native element, at home on the old shamrock sod." My esteemed friend has always thought Claddagh, its people, and its institutions, "very *supayrior*," as the late Lord Kilmullock used to say of *Mrs. Perkins's Ball*, in which Thackeray introduced his lordship as *The Mulligan*.

Paddy McGauran is in the book line, and lives down on the Blind Quay nearly opposite the George Robins of the Irish Capital, whose mart is on the other side of the Liffey, and whose sales Paddy attends when there are any literary bargains likely to be had that carry the stamp and dust of antiquity on them; and he is on that account most likely to have them all to himself. The bibliopole's magazine is more of a *depôt* for his country *clientèle*, which is numerous, than for his metropolitan trade, which is next to *nil*; and he sells more in one of his rounds through the counties of Wicklow, Kildare, and Carlow, than in Dublin through the round of a twelvemonth.

Amongst his mental acquirements gathered together from his travels and desultory reading, Paddy has a rare *repertoire* of stories of the people, of all sorts, which he tells, if sad, with great pathos, if droll, with equal unction, and which cause him to be a welcome visitor to every farmer's house in the three counties before mentioned.

One evening, during the last Christmas holidays, he gave us the following reminiscence of Claddagh, his birth-place, as we all sat round Widow Walshe's great turf fire, in the good old house of Ballyslaughter, every one of us being compelled to take a pint of salt water, instead of (*more majorum*) a *jorum* of the Widow's excellent punch, if we would not, or could not (it mattered not which), spin out some yarn about ghosts or fairies, the devil or the Danes, Will-o'-the-Wisp or the Leprauchaun, or any of the Irish rogues and rapparees. You may be sure that there was not as much salt-and-water drank throughout the evening as would physic a starling or blind a snipe; and when the smoking jug came round to the pedlar, and the widow's eldest son told him he was in possession of the floor, he washed down the literary cobwebs from his throat, and this was, as he promised it would and should be, "without circumlocution, circumvention, premeditation, or prevarication,"

PADDY MCGAURAN'S STORY.

"Well, boys and girls," says Paddy, "if there was a map of Ireland on the walls, which I am surprised there isn't, and which I could let Mrs. Walshe, or any other lady or gentleman present, have

for less than cost price, I would point out to such of you as have never seen or heard of it, that Claddagh is the place where the boys step on board the boats that are built on the edge of the bay, that looks across the Atlantic all the way to America, and brave boys and tight boats they are that go out in all sorts of weather to catch the cod and herring. And it's down there that the beautiful and bouncing girls are reared, that empty the boats and carry the fish through the country—that wear the Spanish mantle of blue, and the red petticoat that sets more than the bull mad, and the nate Barcelona handkerchief round their rosy laughing faces :

“The girls with the dark flowing hair,
And their round arms ruddy and bare,
And their legs that at dance or fair
Caper so wild and high;
With their beautiful eyes of gray, boys!
And their blue ones that laugh and say boys,
'If your *intintions* lie this way, boys,
His reverence lives hard by!’

Well, to be sure, and it's good strong arms and legs that the darlings ought to have, and strong backs and shoulders to boot, to carry the big creels and baskets, and trot along under them, as merry as pinkeens,* and singing away like May girls: arrah, my jewels, it would make the oldest of us all young again, just to get a look at a string of them trotting out under the fish, down the road on a summer's morning.

“Once upon a time, and that was about sixty years ago, one of my fine town's girls, like many another fine girl in Claddagh, and everywhere else that I know of, and may be their kind mothers before them, took it into her head to fall in love. It's an ancient custom of ours, and we have a great many of them, for the boys to run away with the girls—more power to them!—before they marry them. It's not abduction, do you see, by any manner of means, as it used to be down in Munster before the law put it down, where they purshued the custom as they did their other *shindies* for the pure pleasure, and no other, of putting down the law.

“Johnny Connor was ould Billy Bathagh the Mayor of Claddagh's son; and I'd have such of you as don't know the original Irish to understand that a *Bathagh* means a lame or a wooden-legged fellow, who either goes along with a pop-and-carry-one sort of gate, or like that famous pensioner of the Ould Man's Hospital at Kilmainham—

“Bould Corporal Casey, oh!
Whose one leg was good,
And the other was wood,
And he hopped like a duck round a daisy, oh!”

* Minnows.

Billy was a knowledgable man, and was known to have put by a little money. He sold, moreover, the best tobacco and whisky in Claddagh, wherever he got them. However little his customers knew upon that question, Billy took good care that the coast-guard and the gaugers should know less. And so it turned out that, one fine day, he was elected Mayor of Claddagh.

“Norah Connolly was a snug freize-weaver’s daughter. Her father, Darby Connolly, was an honest, industrious man that wove the only raal ould Irish cloth that was worth wearing; and as he had the woollen trade of Claddagh nearly all to himself, Darby, as well as his neighbour and friend Billy Bathagh, could lay his hand on a good bit of money, to marry his only child, or do anything else in reason he liked with it.

“Norah was as fine a girl as ever stepped in shoe leather, or the sun shone down upon, and a great *belle* in her way. Indeed, she was the *belle* of Claddagh, and you might say that when Johnny Connor won her heart, and bore off the *belle*, which he did like a man, that there was something to ring the *bells* about for a month of Sundays.

“There’s no use in me telling you how many of the girls of Claddagh set their best looks at Johnny, and how many of its boys showed off before Norah at all sorts of manly games and diversions, such as leaping, and vaulting, and pitching the bar, and pushing the stone, and wrestling, and football, and dancing; but Johnny beat them all; and with all that he was no more proud of his success than he was of his good looks, which never made him conceited.

“Norah’s father Darby was the proudest man in Claddagh. He lost his poor wife when their only child was little more than a babby. The more she grew, the stronger was the grasp she held of his heart; and every guinea he put by, he thought of Norah. She was the apple of his eye, and the light of his home. He thought her far above marrying any young man in the parish. Indeed, he thought her fit to step into a carriage, and marry a lord. He intended that when the happy day arrived, when she was to change her condition, she would do so with her only parent’s consent; but it’s little the boys and girls care for parents’ or guardians’ consent down in Claddagh, where they’ll only ask for their own, although they won’t marry from among each other.

“And so it came round, one fine morning in May, the month for billing and cooing among the birds, and for kissing and coorting among the boys and girls, that Johnny and Norah ran off with each other without saying a word about it at home to either of their fathers, and made a match of it. But they didn’t run far—only into Galway, which was like stepping next door, where they were married by Father Dan O’Hara, a mighty great preacher in his day, as well as divine, and a great encourager of early marriages. A cousin of

Norah's, a brave lump of a girl, who was in the secret, was her only bridesmaid; and a cousin of Johnny's, a young man about his own age, was bridegroom's best man on the occasion. When the ceremony was over and they got their breakfast at one of the inns in Galway, they all four drove off on a jaunting-car to a house of entertainment standing about ten miles the other side of Claddagh, and kept by a decent widow woman who was first cousin to Norah's own mother. All was right and regular and on the square.

"Well to be sure, what a dinner the wedding-party had prepared for them by the widow, one of the good old stock, who went by the name of Ready-money Peg, because she managed to keep her accounts straight, by keeping no accounts whatsoever. Some two or three couple of young friends of Johnny's and Norah's, boys and girls who 'got the office,' as the sporting newspapers say, came down from Claddagh to join in the fun, without letting the old people know a word as to where they were going.

"And so, my jewels, they all began dancing to the pleasant music of a couple of fiddlers and a piper, with only a pair of eyes between the three; and as the innocent, hearty boys and girls were tearing away and welting the boards, and Norah above all of them doing full justice to the tune and her own reputation, for she was the best dancer in the County Galway,—just as all this pleasant diversion was going on, what should be seen coming across the bay but a couple of long boats, one of them fifty to a hundred yards before the other, with about a dozen men in each, pulling away together like one man. That beautiful long sweep you can never mistake, flashing the silver lightning from every stroke over the blue water; you know at once it's no fishermen or merchantmen but a man-of-war's-men that you see before you. And sure enough there was a fifty-gun frigate lying a good way out in the bay for about a week or two before, under pretence of looking after the fisheries, and keeping the French chaps from encroaching on our rights and titles. On they came and everybody thought that they were only making for shore to have a screech and a drink at the widow's, and to go back again to their ship in peace and comfort. But, *wirasthrew!* it's little we know when we get up in the morning what's to happen to us before we lie down at night!

"When the boats drew up on the beach, which they did opposite the widow's door, Johnny Connor, who was king of the company, and looked upon the house as his own for the night, went out and invited the blue jackets to come in and drink the bride's health and dance at her wedding. With this invitation the new-comers most politely complied, and began to drink and dance away their English dances with the Claddagh girls who knew the *Sailor's Hornpipe* and *Pop goes the Weasel* as well as the best of them.

"As the clock struck twelve and Norah had stolen off to bed upstairs in the bridal chamber which her relation the landlady prepared for her, a long shrill whistle, which no doubt was the boatswain's, was heard coming from the front of the house outside; and at that, my jewels, up jumped the four-and-twenty sailors all in a row, and laid hold of the poor half-dozen Claddagh boys, drawing their cutlasses and cocking their pistols, and crying, 'Damn you, come along with me, says the saucy *Arethusa*!' What could the poor fellows do but knock under. In less than three minutes they were marched out of the house, with the gags in their mouths and the darbies on their wrists, and bundled in two batches on board the boats. The Claddagh girls were at first dumb-founded at what they saw going on, the rush was so sudden and the capture so quiet and handy, just as if a lot of poachers had snared so many hares or pheasants and bagged and made off with them. The widow was pinned up with her back to the wall behind the counter in the bar, by a couple of the ruffians with their pistols to her breast, swearing they'd blow her into Davy's locker or the middle of next week, if she didn't keep her breath to cool her own porridge with, and her clacking all to herself.

"The boats pulled off, and then it was, of course, the row began, and it would split the heart of a stone to hear the bawling and roaring of the girls. Norah was down among them, half-dressed, with her long raven hair streaming in the wind, the tears falling down her white cheeks like the rain, and her beautiful arms stretched as high as her head towards the bay, as if they would reach over it; and she kept crying out as the boats got farther and farther away, and the sound of the oars grew fainter and fainter every stroke. 'Oh, *wirasthrew*! oh, *wirasthrew*! oh, sure they haven't taken my *boucheleen bawn** from me!' And 'Give me, oh give me back my Johnny!' The rest of the girls kept crying out in the same way, every one for herself, of *coorse*, calling on her sweetheart to come back to her; but the poor boys couldn't, for there they sat in the boats gagged and hand-cuffed—not able to wag a tongue, or shake a limb, although you were to pay them for it.

"Poor Norah at last fell down exhausted, and was carried upstairs by the widow and the girls to bed. From that bed she didn't rise for a month at least; for the next morning she awoke with a brain fever, which nearly took her off to join her mother in glory; and so it would, if her youth and fine constitution hadn't stood her friends, and that she lived for the hopes of seeing Johnny again.

"The frigate had just got all that were in the boats on board, when a fair wind sprung up blowing southward by Dingle and Bantry, round by Cape Clear and Kinsale, and up to Cork.

* Fair-haired young boy.

"It's myself sure enough that forgets the war that they all sailed away for, and the foreigners they went to fight against. May be it was the French, or the Spanish, or the Dutch, or all three of them together. And I'm equally astray in the regard of the Admirals that our poor boys sailed and fought under—Duncan, or Howe, or Jarvis, or Ould Shiver-the-wind Paddy Packenham himself; but this I can tell you that Johnny Connor fought and fell whoever it was—as the '*Univarsal* Songster' says—in the arms of victory.

"Well, it was in the month of May—and just three years after the Claddagh boys were run away with. During the time one or other of them used to write home to those they loved, but Johnny to his Norah more constantly than the rest, saying how bravely he was, and how well he was getting on. And he used always to tell her not to fret, and he'd soon be home again with her. It was just as the moon was up in the top of the blue sky that hadn't a cloud in it, and the waves as smooth and as quiet as a mill-pond. Just opposite them Norah was sitting looking in sadness from the window of the same room where she was to have passed the first night of her honeymoon. The house belonged, as you may all suppose, to her mother's first cousin, the Widow Hagerty. It was not far from twelve o'clock when the widow called upon the lonely and disconsolate girl on her way to her own bed-chamber to bid her good-night, and to tell her to be careful with her candle; for the landlady used always to say that if ever by any accident the house was to be set on fire, there was whisky enough below stairs to blow every mother sowl in the place all the way into Galway, or to the Isles of Arran in the other direction. But she didn't find Norah with a candle lighting; for the moonlight made the room as clear as if it was noon-day, and she was sitting with the window wide open, looking out on the bright waves of the ocean. She used to come over from Claddagh now and then, and spend the day and night with her relation, sometimes two or three together that she might roam about by day, and gaze by night all mournfully upon the spot where they took him away from her.

"'I've just dropped in upon you, dear Norah, to say good-night, and to caution you as I always do about the candle; but I see I've no occasion, for it's out, and you're sitting there in the cowld without a mantle or shawl about you. *Acushla machree*, take care of your health for your own and all our sakes, and for Johnny's in particular, if you ever hope to see him, and be the same hale and hardy girl he'll expect to find you, instead of having that cough that every now and then tears you to pieces, and makes one almost think that you're on the brink of a consumption.'

"'Oh, I'll never see him again,' said the poor girl very sorrowfully, 'I know I won't; for I dreamt last night something woefully bad entirely about him. Last Holly Eve Night, too, the melted lead I

threw out of the grisset* into the great tub of water ran in an instant into the shape of a coffin. I know that the worst is coming. Oh, I know and feel it too well. This night three years it was that they took him away from me, and I am going to stay up another hour to think of him, and to pray for him; for it will never come round again for either of us.'

"The widow cautioned her against giving way to grief and sadness, and, with another word about the candle, if by chance she lit it again, went to her own room, and was soon in bed. Not many minutes after, as Norah was sitting at the open window, with her eyes fixed on the spot far out at sea where the frigate once lay, and that was the far, far away line where the sky was kissed by the ocean, she saw all on a sudden the heavens open in that direction; and such a flood of light appeared as if the Bog of Allan was on fire, and lit up everything for miles around. It got lighter and brighter as it came over the sea towards her till she could count all the colours of the rainbow in it; and as it came nearer it became round like the sun, and darted out from all sides the same sort of beautiful rays that you see in the glories about the heads of the saints in the chapel pickethers. Wonderful to tell, the first object she plainly observed in this great wheel of glory was a frigate about the size of the one that took Johnny away; but its masts and rigging were all shattered and broken, and a part of its decks were battered in and torn to pieces. It was blazing away too like mad from the port-holes, and the booming of the guns was as if they were firing only a hundred yards off. When the smoke cleared away, the ship cleared out of the fiery circle after it, and in the very centre of this a man appeared in a sailor's dress, as the great orb of glory came nearer and nearer to Norah. It was then, sure enough, that she knew what the vision meant; and she thought upon Johnny. And, as sure as she thought of him, there he was, great as the distance was, before her! She never could mistake his handsome manly face, his beautiful white neck, and his light curly locks; but his roguish blue eyes, that used once to smile on her so good-naturedly, had no longer the fire in them; and he looked so sad and sorrowful, as much as to say, 'God be with you, darling Norah, for it's all over for both of us.' And worse still, and more horrible than all, his forehead and face were spotted and streaked with blood; and she could see a red, red stream of it trickling down on to his breast through his collar that was all wide open.

"Norah blessed herself three times over, and fell on her knees still looking out of the window on to the Bay, and began to say her prayers for the souls of 'the faithful departed' in general and for Johnny's in particular. Just as she finished his name he disappeared from the

* Grisset—the iron ladle in which lead for bullets, shot, slugs, or the magic purposes of Hallow E'en is melted.

centre of the glory, and in his place there appeared a divine transparency of a brighter and purer light than any part of the illumination that surrounded it. There she saw an inscription, which I'll repeat to you, and which, no doubt whatever, was writ by Johnny's Guardian Angel:—

“ ‘For thy true love kneel and pray,
For a twelvemonth and a day,
In Hy Brisail's* sacred isle,
Waits his soul in hope the while,
Till those days of penance o'er,
He shall leave the haunted shore,
On the wings of light and love,
To join the saints and thee above.’

“As the beautiful vision faded away into the moonlight, quite overcome with all she saw, she fell back off her knees in a swoon upon the floor, and there she was found with the window still open and the night air blowing upon her, the cold at her heart, and her limbs like icicles, when the widow came in to look after her and the candle a little before the dawn of the morning.

“Everything that money, and the doctors, and family attention and kindness could do was done for Norah; but the scene of that night was too much for her nerves, and the fresh cold she caught overcame her constitution. The cough she already had was changed to a church-yard one, and the strength was taken out of her. Her angel spirit still kept on the same to the last; and she counted every day with hope and joy the number of days she had still to live till she was to get away to her Johnny, as the school boys count every morning they get up, coming Christmas, how many days more it is to the holidays. And so, after she knelt and prayed every night, noon, and morning of the time of the spirit's warning, and got a hundred masses, and every month a grand office, chanted for Johnny's soul, she laid herself down to take her last rest. Father Dan O'Hara, the same priest that married her four years before, gave her the last blessed rites of the Church, and dismissed her to her bright reward. Her virgin spirit flew upwards to join her own dear true love's on high, or to meet it on its way; and her beautiful remains, never so beautiful as in death, were laid in peace and honour in the churchyard near Oughterard; for it was there her people were buried for ages before her. She had a great wake, and the greatest *berrin*† ever seen

* O'Brazil, or Hy Brisail, the paradise of the ancient Irish, is to be seen on a very fine day—the natives say—from the rocky shore of Arran. Gerald Griffin has the following poetic allusion to it:

“On the ocean that hollows the rocks where you dwell
A shadowy land has appeared, as they tell;
Men thought it a region of sunshine and rest,
And they called it O'Brazill, the isle of the blest.”

† *Berrin*—Funeral.

in that part of the country from that day to this. There was a mile of jaunting and low-back cars, and a couple more miles of people on foot following her all along the mountain road. Her coffin was carried on their shoulders by the Claddagh boys, and the Claddagh girls threw the sweetest flowers they could gather into her grave upon it, after Father Dan prayed over her and chanted the *De Profundis*.

"Before I close my story I must tell you that I told it not many years ago to the schoolmaster of Black Ditches, as we sat near the King's Bridge, in the Valley of the Liffey, on a Sunday evening in summer; and that was only a couple of months before he died, poor fellow, of the fever. Whenever he heard anything that took a grasp of his heart, he used to write some wild Irish verses upon it; and these were his sentiments upon my little bit of *Love and Murder* :

NORAH'S LAMENT.

I.

In the flowery month of May
All on our bridal day,
They forced my love away!
Wirasthrue! Wirasthrue!
They forced him o'er the main
To sail for France and Spain;
And I'll see him ne'er again!
Wirasthrue! Wirasthrue!

II.

As I wander by the shore,
I hear the battle's roar;
I see my true love's gore;
Wirasthrue! Wirasthrue!
His comely bosom white,
His smiling face so bright,
Black and bloody from the fight!
Wirasthrue! Wirasthrue!

III.

His livid lips are dumb;
But his sad eyes bid me come;
I'm coming, love,—I come!
Wirasthrue! Wirasthrue!
No longer, maidens dear,
Can my spirit linger here:
Strew the lilies on my bier!
Wirasthrue! Wirasthrue!

"So the Lord be merciful to us all when that sad time comes, and receive our souls, like Norah's and Johnny's, in glory! That, ladies and gentlemen, is my story. I cannot swear to the truth of all the supernatural parts of it. I can only tell you that my mother used to tell it to us children when I was a boy, and that it was told to her by my grandmother afore her."

The Buried Treasure.

By MM. ERCKMAN-CHATRIAN.

ONE night, in the month of September, 1828, Furbach, the worthy and respectable bookseller of the Rue Neuhauser, Munich, awoke suddenly and in astonishment, at hearing footsteps in the garret over his chamber. Somebody was pacing to and fro in trouble of mind; one of the flat skylights in the roof was opened, and long-drawn sighs were breathed into the silence.

At that moment the clock of the Jesuits' chapel struck one, and, underneath Monsieur Furbach's bedroom, horses clattered and stamped in their stable.

The garret was occupied by the coachman, Nicklausse, a tall, good-humoured fellow from Pitcherland, dry, wiry, an excellent manager of horses, and not without education, having had some little schooling at the seminary of Marienthal; but simple-minded and superstitious to such a degree that he constantly carried about with him, under his shirt, a small bronze cross, which he kissed every morning and evening, though he was over thirty years of age.

Monsieur Furbach listened: after awhile the skylight was closed, the footsteps were stilled, the coachman's bed creaked, and all was silent.

"Ay, ay!" said the old bookseller, "the moon's at the full to-night; Nicklausse is beating himself about the chest and lamenting his sins, poor devil!"

And without further troubling himself with the matter, he turned round in his bed and went off to sleep again.

Next morning, about seven o'clock, Monsieur Furbach, his feet in his slippers, was quietly taking his breakfast, preparatory to descending to his shop, when two little taps sounded on his door.

"Come in!" he cried, considerably surprised at receiving so early a visit.

The door opened and Nicklausse appeared, dressed in a gray blouse, his head covered with a wide-brimmed mountaineer's felt hat, and his hand clutching a stout wild-apple cudgel, just as he had presented himself on first arriving from his village. He was pale.

"Monsieur Furbach," said he, "I've come to ask you to give me my discharge. Thank heaven! I'm at last going to be at ease, and able to help my grandmother Orchel, of Vangebourg."

"Have you come in for an inheritance?" asked the old bookseller.

"No, Monsieur Furbach, I've had a dream. I dreamed of a

treasure, between twelve and one o'clock, and I am going to lay my hand on it."

The good fellow spoke with so much conviction that Monsieur Furbach was completely taken aback.

"You've had a dream, eh?" he said.

"Yes, Monsieur. I've seen the treasure as plainly as I see you, in a very low-roofed vault, in an old castle. There was the figure of a nobleman lying above it with joined hands, and a large iron pot on his head."

"But where was it, Nicklausse?"

"Ah! that I don't know. I shall first go in search of the castle; then I shall find the vault and the crowns. The gold pieces fill a coffin six feet long; I seem to see them now!"

The eyes of Nicklausse glittered in a strange fashion.

"Come, come, my poor Nicklausse—come, come!" cried old Furbach; "let us be reasonable. Sit down. A dream—very well, very well. In the time of Joseph, I don't say that dreams mayn't have meant something; but at this time of day things are different. Everybody dreams. I myself have dreamt a hundred times of riches, but, unfortunately, I have never found 'em. Think of what you are about; you are going to give up a good place, to run after a castle which perhaps has no existence."

"I have seen it," said the coachman. "It is a big castle falling into ruins: below it there is a village, a long, steep, winding road, a very old church. Many people still live in this part of the country, and a large river flows near."

"You've dreamed the whole of it, I've no doubt," said Monsieur Furbach, shrugging his shoulders.

A moment later, wishing to bring the man back to reason by some means or other, he demanded:

"Your vault—what was that like?"

"It resembled an oven."

"And you went down into it with a light, no doubt?"

"No, monsieur."

"But, if you had no light, how could you see the coffin, the knight, and the pieces of gold?"

"They were lighted by a ray of the moon."

"Come, that won't do! Does the moon shine in a vault? Your dream, you see, hasn't common sense."

Nicklausse began to lose his temper. He restrained himself, however, and said:

"I've seen it. I care nothing about all the rest; and, as to the knight, here it is," he cried, opening his blouse, "here it is!"

He drew from his bosom the little bronze cross suspended from a ribbon, and laid it on the table with an air of ecstasy.

Monsieur Furbach, who was a great amateur of medals and antiquities, was surprised at the strange and truly precious workmanship of this relic. He examined it closely, and discovered that it belonged to the twelfth century. In place of the effigy of the Saviour, on the centre limb was represented in high relief the figure of a knight with hands joined in the attitude of prayer. No date was upon it.

During this examination, Nicklausse anxiously followed the bookseller's every gesture.

"It's very beautiful," said Monsieur Furbach, "and I shouldn't be altogether astonished at your having looked at it until you had come to believe it represented a knight keeping guard over a treasure; but, trust me, the true treasure to be looked after is that of the Cross itself; the rest isn't worth talking about."

Nicklausse returned no answer; only after he had passed the ribbon over his neck, he said:

"I shall go—the holy Virgin will enlighten me! When heaven wishes to do good to us we ought to profit by it. You have always treated me well, Monsieur Furbach, it is true; but heaven commands me to be gone. It is, besides, time for me to marry; and I have seen there, in my dream, a young girl who seemed born expressly to become my wife."

"In what direction are you going?" asked the bookseller, who couldn't help smiling at such simplicity.

"Whichever direction the wind blows from," replied Nicklausse; "that's the surest way."

"You are quite decided?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Very well; then we must settle your account. I am sorry to lose so good a servant; but I have no right to hinder you in following your vocation."

They descended together to the counting-house, and, after consulting his books, counted out to Nicklausse two hundred and fifty Austrian florins, the accumulation of his savings, with interest, for six years. After which the worthy man wished him good-speed, and set himself to look out for another coachman.

For a long time the old bookseller related this strange story, laughing heartily at the simplicity of the folks of Pitcherland, and recommending them to his friends and acquaintances as excellent servants.

Some years later, Monsieur Furbach having married his daughter, Mademoiselle Anna Furbach, to the rich bookseller, Rubeneck, of Leipsic, retired from business. But he had so firmly contracted the habit of working, that, in spite of being sixty years of age, inaction very soon became insupportable to him. It was then that he made several journeys into Italy, France, and Belgium.

In the early autumn days of 1838 he visited the banks of the

Rhine. He was a little keen-eyed old man, with red cheeks and a carriage still firm. He was to be seen trotting about the deck of the steamer, his nose in the air, his over-coat tightly buttoned, an umbrella under his arm, and a silk cap drawn over his ears, chatting and asking about everything, taking notes, and freely consulting his guide-book.

One morning, between Frisenheim and Neubourg, after having spent the night in the cabin of the *dampfschiff*, in company with thirty other passengers—women, children, tourists, tradesmen—heaped upon the benches, Monsieur Furbach, happy to escape from such a vapour-bath, went upon deck at break of day.

It was about four o'clock in the morning, and a heavy mist hung upon the river. The steam roared, the vessel chopped slowly along, a few distant lights trembled in the mist, and at times great noises arose amid the darkness; but dominating all was the voice of old Rhine, recounting the eternal legend of the generations which had passed away, the crimes, the exploits, the grandeur and the fall of those ancient margraves, whose lairs were becoming distinguishable in the awakening light.

Leaning thoughtful-eyed against the side of the vessel, the old bookseller saw these memories defile before him. The stoker and the engineer moved about him; some sparks flew into the air; a lantern swung at the end of its cord; the breeze threw jets of spray before it. Other passengers glided like shadows up from the cabin.

Monsieur Furbach having turned his head, perceived a dark mass of ruins on the right bank of the stream, and a number of small houses, ranged step-like at the foot of vast ramparts; a flying bridge swept the frothy river with its long dragging rope.

He went under the lantern, opened his guide-book and read: "Vieux Brisach, *Brisacum* and *Brisacus mons*, founded by Drusus; formerly the capital of Brisgau, passed for being one of the strongest towns in Europe: the key of Germany. Bernard V. de Zoehringen built the fortified castle. Frederic Barbarossa caused the relics of Saint Gervais and Saint Protais to be transported there, into the church of Saint Etienne. Gustave Horn, a Swede, tried to take it in 1633, after having gained great advantages over the Imperialists: he failed. Brisach was ceded to France by the treaty of Westphalia; it was given back at the peace of Ruyswick, in exchange for Strasbourg. It was burnt by the French in 1793; its fortifications were demolished in 1814."

"So," said he to himself, "this is the Old Brisach of the Counts of Eberstein, of Osgau, of Zoehringen, of Suabia, and of Austria. I can't go by *that* without seeing it."

A few moments later he descended, with his luggage, from the steamer into a boat, and the *dampfschiff* continued her passage towards Bâle.

There is not, perhaps, on either bank of the Rhine, a site more strange than the ancient capital of Brisgau, with its dismantled castle, its thousand-coloured walls of brick, rubble, and mud, planted fifteen or sixteen hundred feet above the stream. It is no longer a town, and yet it is not a ruin. The dead old town is overrun by hundreds of rustic cottages, that press upon its flanks, scale its bastions, and hang on to its fissures, into which the hungry and tattered population eat their way, like gnats and mosquitoes, and the thousand insects with nippers and borers, that take up their lodgings in old oaks, and split, dry up, and reduce them to powder.

Above thatched roofs, ranged against the ramparts, still stands the gate of the fortress, with its sculptured coat of arms, its portcullis and drawbridge. Wide breaches allow the *débris* to stream down by the side of it; bramble, moss, and ivy join their destructive efforts to those of men! All is falling, all is passing away!

Vine-stems have taken possession of the embrasures, the goatherd and his goats boldly place themselves on the cornices, and, strange to see, the women of the village, the girls, and old gossips, put their faces out from a thousand holes made in the castle-walls; every cellar of the old fortress has been turned into a commodious dwelling-place, all that had to be done was to put skylights and windows into the ramparts. Shirts, red or blue gowns, all the rags in fact of these households, are seen fluttering in the air from their summits. Above all still stand a few solid edifices, gardens, large oaks, and the Cathedral of Saint Etienne, so much venerated by Barbarossa.

Throw over all these objects the gray tints of morning twilight, unroll below the scarce-visible expanse of the roaring river, picture to yourself rows of barrels and boxes on the broad stones of the jetty, and you will realise the impression made upon Monsieur Furbach on setting foot on the shore.

In the midst of a mass of packages he perceived a man with bare chest, and hair smoothed flat to his temples, sitting on the edge of a truck, the yoke upon his shoulders.

"Does Monsieur stop at Old Brisach? Does Monsieur put up at the Schlossgarten?" inquired this man, eagerly.

"Yes, my good fellow; you may take charge of my luggage."

There was no need to repeat the invitation. The boatman received his twelve *pfennings*, and the traveller began the ascent to the ancient castle.

As the daylight increased in power the immense river gradually detached itself from the darkness, and its thousand picturesque details revealed themselves with strange distinctness. Here, on a partly demolished tower, formerly the signal-station, a flight of pigeons had taken up their abode; they were tranquilly preening themselves in

the loop-holes whence, in other days, archers let fly their deadly arrows. In another place, an early-rising weaver pushed out of a donjon window his hanks of flax to dry in the open air at the end of long poles. Vine-dressers climbed the steep sides of the ascent; the cries of some martens pierced the silence: they could not be absent from the ruins.

At the end of about a quarter of an hour, Monsieur Furbach and his guide reached a wide winding roadway paved with flints, black and slippery as iron, bounded by a breast-high wall, the curve of which was carried up to the platform. It was the ancient advance guard of Old Brisach. From the top of this roadway, by the gate of Gontran the Miser, leaning over the low wall, Monsieur Furbach looked down upon the innumerable cottages descending step-like to the river-bank; their back yards, stairs, and worm-eaten exterior galleries, their roofs of shingle, thatch and planks, and their little smoking chimneys. Housewives lighting their fires on the hearth, undressed children moving about the insides of these cottages, men blacking their boots; a cat wandering on the highest roof-peak; in a poultry-yard, six hundred feet below, some fowls scratching in a dung-hill, and through the fallen roof of an old barn he saw a litter of rabbits, their backs raised and their tails cocked up, frisking in the shade. All these things presented themselves to view, even in the dreariest nooks; human life, manners, habits, family pleasures and miseries, displayed themselves without reticence or mystery.

Yet, for the first time in his life perhaps, Monsieur Furbach found a mystery in these things: a feeling of undefinable alarm glided in upon his mind. Was it the multiplicity of the relations existing between all these beings, of which he could give no explanation to himself? Was it a feeling of the eternal cause presiding in the development of these existences? Was it the dull melancholy of these ramparts hastening to their destruction under the efforts of this infinite number of creatures? I know not. He himself could not have told; but he felt that another world in some way co-existed with the world about him; that shadows came and went as aforetime in the domain, while over all there was the life, the movement, the activity of the flesh. He felt afraid, and hastened after his truck. The keen air of the platform, on leaving the winding road, dissipated these strange impressions. While crossing the terrace, he saw, to his right, the ancient gray-red cathedral, still unshaken on its granite base as in the time of the Crusades; to the left, some modest private houses; a young girl giving chickweed to her birds, and an old baker in a dust-coloured waistcoat smoking at the door of his shop; in front, at the further extremity of the upland, the Schlossgarten Hotel, its white front standing out from the green background of a park. It was there that tourists going from Fribourg to Brigau put up. It

was, indeed, one of those excellent German hotels, simple, elegant, and comfortable, worthy to entertain even a travelling *milord*.

Monsieur Furbach entered the sonorous hall, where a pretty chambermaid received him, and had his luggage carried into a handsome bedroom on the first floor. There the old bookseller washed, shaved himself, and changed his shirt; after which, fresh, cheerful, and with a good appetite, he descended to the large public room to take his coffee according to his custom.

Now he had been about half an hour in this room—a spacious *salle*, hung with white paper ornamented with bunches of flowers, the floor sanded, high windows of shining glass, opening on to the terrace—and, having finished his breakfast, was getting ready to start on a tour of inspection in the neighbourhood, when a tall man in a black coat, clean shaven and fresh-looking, a napkin under his arm, the master of the hotel in fact, entered, casting an eye on the tables, covered with their white damask cloths, and advanced gravely towards Monsieur Furbach, bowing as he did so with a ceremonious air; then looking up at him, he uttered an exclamation of surprise:

“Seigneur Dieu! is it possible? My old master?” Then with outstretched hands and eager voice, he cried: “Monsieur Furbach, don’t you recognise me?”

“It’s Nicklausse!”

“Yes, Nicklausse,” cried the landlord of the hotel; “yes, it’s me. Ah, Monsieur! if I dare——”

Monsieur Furbach had risen.

“Don’t be uneasy,” said he, smiling, “I am happy, very happy, Nicklausse, to see you again so well off. Let us embrace, if it will be any pleasure to you.”

And they hugged each other like old comrades.

Nicklausse wept; the servants flocked in; the good landlord rushed to the door at the end of the room crying:

“Wife! children! come and see here! Make haste! My old master is here! Come quickly!”

A young woman of thirty, fresh, graceful and handsome, a tall boy of eight or nine years old, and another somewhat younger, appeared.

“It’s my master!” cried Nicklausse. “Monsieur Furbach, here is my wife—here are my children. Ah! if you would only bless them!”

The old bookseller had never blessed anybody, but he very willingly kissed the young wife and the little ones also, the younger of whom set up a-crying, under the belief that something distressing was the matter, while the other stared wonderstruck with all his eyes.

“Ah! Monsieur,” said the young wife, all flushed and agitated, “how many times my husband has spoken of you to me—of your goodness, of all he owes to you!”

"Yes," interrupted Nicklausse, "a hundred times I have been minded to write to you, Monsieur; but I had so many things to tell you that required explanation. In short, you must forgive me."

"I forgive you with all my heart, my dear Nicklausse," cried the old bookseller. "Be sure that I am happy to know of your good fortune, though I know nothing of how it has come to you."

"You shall know all about it," replied the landlord; "this evening—to-morrow—I'll tell you the whole story. It is the Lord that has protected me! It is to Him I owe all! It's almost a miracle, isn't it, Fridoline?"

The young woman made a sign of assent.

"Well, well, all is for the best," said Monsieur Furbach, reseating himself; "you must allow me to spend a day or two in your hotel, to renew our acquaintance."

"Ah, Monsieur, you are at home!" cried Nicklausse; "I'll go with you to Fribourg, and show you all the curiosities of the country; I'll conduct you myself."

The warm regard of these good people was not to be withstood; Monsieur Furbach was touched even to tears by it. During the whole of that day and the day following Nicklausse did the honours of Old Brisach and its environs. Whether he would or not, Nicklausse himself drove him about in a carriage; and as Nicklausse was the richest proprietor in the country, as he possessed the finest vines, the fattest pastures in the district, and had money invested on all sides, the astonishment of Brisach may be imagined, at seeing him driving a stranger about in this manner: Monsieur Furbach passed for some prince travelling incognito. As to the service of the hotel, as to the good cheer, the wines and other accessories of the kind, I say nothing; all was splendid; the old bookseller could not but admit that he had never been treated more grandly, and it was not without impatience that he awaited the explanation of the "miracle," as Nicklausse called it. The dream of his old domestic recurred to his memory, and appeared to him the only explanation possible of a fortune so rapidly acquired.

At length, on the third day, towards nine o'clock in the evening, after supper, the old master and his coachman, finding themselves alone with some bottles of old Rudesheim before them, looked long and expectingly at one another. Nicklausse was about to commence his confidences when a servant entered to clear the table.

"Go to bed, Kasper," said he, "you can clear away these things in the morning. Only lock and bolt the outer door."

When the domestic was gone, Nicklausse rose, opened one of the windows of the room to freshen the air, then, gravely reseating himself, commenced his communication in these terms:

"You remember, Monsieur Furbach, the dream that made me leave

your service, in 1828. For a long while that dream pursued me; at one time I saw myself pulling down an old wall at the foot of a ruin; at another I descended the well of a winding staircase till I reached a sort of postern, and crawled to an iron ring in one of the paving-stones—that made me perspire blood and water.

“This dream made me very unhappy, but when I had raised the flag-stone, and seen the cellar, the knight, the treasure, all my distresses were forgotten. I thought myself already master of the wealth, and I was dazzled by it. I said to myself, ‘Nicklausse, the Lord has chosen to elevate you to the pinnacle of honours and glory! How happy your grandmother Orchel will be, to see you return to the village in a coach and four! And the others—old schoolmaster Yeri, sacristan Omacht, and all the people who said from morning to night that I should never do anything, how they will open their eyes, and what long noses they will pull! Ha! ha! ha!’

“I pictured these things and others like them to myself, that filled my heart to overflow with satisfaction, and redoubled my desire to become possessed of the treasure. But when once I was in the Rue Neuhauser, my bag on my back and my stick in my hand, and I had really to take the road to the castle, you could not believe, Monsieur, how embarrassed I found myself.

“I was at the corner of your shop, seated on a stone, looking to see from which side the wind was blowing. Unfortunately there was no wind that day: the weather-cocks were all quite still, some pointing to the right, others to the left. And all the streets that crossed each other before my eyes seemed to say: ‘This is the way you must go!—No, this way!’

“What was I to do?

“I reflected till the perspiration ran down my back: at last, to give myself some fresh ideas, I went into the *Coq Rouge*, facing the Little Arcades, to get a drink of wine. I had taken good care to fasten my money into a leathern belt under my blouse, for at the *Coq Rouge*, which stands at the beginning of Trois Copeaux alley, there are a good many honest fellows who would have been happy to have relieved me of it.

“The low and narrow tap-room, lit by two casements looking into a back yard, was filled with smoke. Waggoners, in blouses, with battered hats or thread-bare caps, moved about like shadows, and from time to time a match shone in the midst of the cloud; a red nose, downcast eyes, a hanging lip, became for an instant visible, then all again became dim.

“The tavern hummed like a drum.

“I seated myself in a corner, my stick between my knees, a can of drink before me, and till nightfall I stayed there, with open mouth and staring eyes, looking at my hat, that seemed to me painted on the wall.

"About eight o'clock I became hungry, and called for a *knackwurst* and another can of wine. They lit the lamp, and two or three hours afterwards I woke as from a dream; Fox, the tavern-keeper, was standing before me, and said:

"'It's three *kreutzer* a night; you can go up to bed.'

"I was conducted to the top of the house, where I found a straw mattress spread on the floor, and the centre beam of the roof immediately over it. I heard two tipsy men in the next attic grumbling that they could not stand upright in it. For myself, I was doubled up under the roof, my head against the tiles.

"I did not close an eye all that night, as much through fear of being robbed as from the effect of my dream, and the desire of setting out, without knowing which way to go.

"At four o'clock the window set in the roof began to turn gray; the other occupants of the attics were snoring like organ-pipes. I descended the stairs backwards and escaped into the street. Hurrying away, I tapped my waist-belt more than a hundred times, to assure myself of its safety. The daylight grew stronger; some servant girls were sweeping the pavements, and two or three watchmen, with sticks under their arms, were pacing the still empty streets. I was quickening my pace, breathing freely the fresh morning air, had reached the Stuttgard Gate, and could already see the trees of the country beyond, when it crossed my mind that I had forgotten to pay for my lodging. It was only three miserable *kreutzer*: Fox was the greatest rascal in Munich, harbouring all the vagabonds of the city, but the idea that such a man might take me for one of his own kind stopped me short.

"I have often heard say, Monsieur Furbach, that virtue is rewarded and crime punished in this world; unfortunately, from having seen so much of the contrary, I can no longer believe it. It ought rather to be said that, from the moment a man is under the protection of invisible beings, all that he does, whether through courage or cowardice, and even against his will, turns to his advantage. It may be regretted that veritable robbers often have such chances, but no matter; if well-off people were always happy, men might make themselves well-off by pocket-picking, and the Lord did not intend that.

"In short, cursing my ill star, I went back to the *Coq Rouge*. Fox was shaving himself in front of a bit of glass placed on the edge of his mantelpiece. When he heard me say that I had returned to pay him his three *kreutzer*, the fellow looked me through and through, as if he suspected some hidden diabolical trick; but after duly reflecting, and drying his beard, he held out his hand, thinking that three *kreutzer* are always worth taking. A fat servant wench, with pumpkin cheeks, who was washing the tables at the moment, did not appear less astonished than he was.

"I was turning to leave the place, when my eyes fell on a row of

little smoke-covered frames, hanging round the room. The windows had been opened to let in fresh air, and there was somewhat more light than on the day before, but that did not prevent the room being still murky. I have often thought since that at certain moments the eyes throw light on what they look upon, as by an interior light, that warns us to be attentive. However that may be, I had already one foot in the alley, when the sight of these frames made me return. They contained engravings of views on the banks of the Rhine, engravings a hundred years old, dirty and fly-stained. Well—strange as it was!—I saw all of them at one glance, and amongst the number I recognised the ruins I had seen in my dream. I turned pale; for a moment I had not strength to mount upon a bench to look at the print more closely. Before a minute had passed, I had ceased to be in doubt: the three towers in front, the village under it, the river five or six hundred feet below, all were there! I read at the foot of the print, in old German characters: ‘Views of the Rhine,—Brisach.’ And, in one corner: “Frederich sculpsit, 1728.” It was just a hundred years old.

“The tavern-keeper observed me.

“‘Aha!’ said he, ‘you are looking at Brisach; that’s in my part of the country. The French burned the town, the beggars!’

“I came down from the bench and asked:

“‘You come from Brisach?’

“‘No, I belong to Mulhausen, some leagues from that place—a famous country; in good years, they drink wine there at two *kreutzer* the litre.’

“‘Is that far from here?’

“‘At least a hundred leagues. One might almost fancy you had a notion of going there.’

“‘It’s very possible I may have.’

“I went out, and he followed me to the door, from which he jeeringly called after me:

“‘Here!—I say! Before you set off for Mulhausen, try if you can recollect anything else you owe me!’

“I made no answer. I was on the way to Brisach. I saw there, in the dark depths of a vault, masses of gold. I already embraced them, took up handfuls of pieces and let them fall; they uttered a dull sound and little peals of laughter that made my blood turn cold.

“This, Monsieur Furbach, was how, after taking my departure from Munich, I safely reached Old Brisach. It was on the 3rd of October, 1828; I shall remember it all my life. That day I had started on my road early in the morning. Towards nine o’clock in the evening I came in sight of the first houses of the village; it poured with rain; my felt hat, my blouse, my shirt, were all soaked through; a breeze from the Swiss glaciers made my teeth chatter; I

seem still to hear the rain falling, the wind hissing, and the Rhine roaring. Not a light shone in Old Brisach. An old woman had directed me up to the Schlossgarten; I had succeeded in finding the steps, and ascended, groping my way, and saying to myself: 'Good heavens, if you do not wish me to perish here, but will accomplish towards a poor soul one quarter of your divine promises, come to my aid!'

"For all that the water went on splashing, the foliage by the side of the slope shivered, and the wind hissed more fiercely the higher I mounted.

"After groping my way for twenty minutes along that winding road, in danger of falling over the side at every step, I saw before me a lantern, slowly advancing: it steamed in the rain, and cast its rays on the old wall.

" 'Hilloa! who goes there?' cried a cracked voice.

" 'A traveller, on his way up to the Schlossgarten,' I replied.

" 'Very good—we'll see.'

"And the light, flickering and staggering, came towards me.

"Above it advanced a dull face, with a flat nose and livid and wrinkled cheeks, surmounted by an old sable cap, from which the whole of the fur had been worn away. A long emaciated arm raised the lantern to the level of my hat; for a few seconds we looked at each other in silence. He had clear gray eyes, like a cat, and eyebrows and beard as white as tow; he wore a great-coat of goat-skin, and gray canvas trousers: it was old Zulpick, the ropemaker, a strange being, living alone in his vault at the foot of the tower of Gontran the Miser. After spinning his cords all day in the little Holly alley behind the church of Saint Etienne, without returning to the passers who wished him good-day any answer beyond a silent nod, he retreated into his dwelling-place, singing through his nose tunes of the times of Barbarossa, and prepared his supper himself; then, with his two elbows resting on the sill of his casement, he gazed out at the Rhine, Alsatia, and the summits of the Swiss mountains, for hours together. He was met sometimes in the night, walking among the ruins, and sometimes, but rarely, he went down to drink *kirschenwasser* with the boatmen and raftsmen, at daddy Korb's house on the jetty, facing the bridge. He would then speak of ancient times and relate old chronicles to these good fellows, who said to themselves: 'Where the deuce has old Zulpick learned all this, who has done nothing all his life but spin cords?'

"Zulpick never failed to attend grand mass on Sundays; but, with singular vanity, he always placed himself in the choir, in the place of the ancient dukes; and, stranger still, the inhabitants of Brisach accepted as quite natural in the old ropemaker what they would have blamed in anyone else.

"Such was the man with the lantern.

"He looked at me for a long time through the rain that streaked the air, and in spite of my growing impatience.

"At length he said in a dry tone:

" 'There is your way.'

"And, with bent back and thoughtful manner, he continued his downward road towards daddy Korb's public-house, muttering confused words to himself.

"As for me, wishing to take advantage of the last rays of the lantern, I climbed rapidly up to the terrace, where a light seemed to me to start from the ground: it was at the Schlossgarten. A servant was still up; I reached the door of the hotel and knocked; the door was opened to me, and the voice of Katel cried:

" 'Ah! Seigneur Dieu! what weather for travellers! what weather! Come in, come in!'

"I entered the hall, and she looked at me.

" 'You'll want to change everything on your back, and you are not rich, I can see. Never mind, come with me into the kitchen; you shall have a good drink of wine and a piece of bread to eat, for the love of God. I'll try and find you an old shirt, and you shall have a warm bed.'

"Thus spoke that excellent creature, whom I thanked from the bottom of my soul.

"Once seated by the side of the fire, I supped like a veritable wolf; Katel raising her hands to heaven and watching me wonderingly. When I had finished she led me to one of the servants' rooms, where, after undressing myself, I was quickly sleeping under the protection of the Lord.

"Waking next day about seven o'clock, I heard the leaves rustling outside. Looking out of my window, which commanded a view of the park, I saw the dead leaves of the broad-spreading plane trees dropping one by one on the deserted walks, and the mist spreading its gray clouds over the Rhine. My clothes were still damp, but I put them on all the same, and, a few moments later, Katel presented me to old Michel Durlach, the proprietor of the hotel, a man of eighty, with baggy eyelids and his face seamed with innumerable wrinkles. He wore a single-breasted waistcoat of brown velvet with silver buttons, blue cloth breeches, black silk stockings, round-toed shoes with wide old-fashioned copper buckles; he was seated beside the china-lined stove in the principal room.

"As I had asked him to give me employment—for I had made up my mind to remain at Old Brisach—after having looked at me for a few moments he requested to see my *livret*, which he gravely set himself to read, with his big spectacles fixed on his blue nose, that looked like the bill of a crow. Every now and then he nodded and murmured:

“ ‘ Good !—good !’

“ At length, raising his eyes, he said with a benevolent smile :

“ ‘ You may stay here, Nicklausse ; you can replace Kasper, who leaves the day after to-morrow to rejoin his regiment. You will have to go down to the landing-place every morning and evening to see if there are any travellers, and bring up their luggage. I will give you six florins a month, with food and lodging ; the generosity of the travellers will double your earnings, and, later on, if we are satisfied with you, we’ll see whether something better can’t be done for you. Are you content with the terms ?’

“ I accepted willingly, for, as I have told you, I was resolved to remain at Old Brisach ; but what confirmed me in my resolution was the arrival of Mademoiselle Fridoline Durlach, whose large blue eyes and sweet smile carried away my heart. As I had seen Fridoline, fresh, smiling, beautiful flaxen hair falling in wide plaits upon her snowy neck, a graceful form, hands rather large and plump, loving-voiced, such as I had seen her in my dream, scarce twenty, and already sighing, like all young girls, for the fortunate hour of marriage, such I then saw her.

“ But on thinking of what I was, Monsieur Furbach—a poor domestic, dressed in a gray blouse, harnessed every evening to my truck like a beast of burthen, my head down-bent, panting and melancholy, I did not dare to believe in the promises of the invisible beings ; I dared not say to myself : ‘ Here is your betrothed, she who has been promised to you !’ No, I dared not dwell on that idea ; I blushed at it ; I trembled at it, I accused myself of folly ; I saw Fridoline so beautiful, and myself so destitute of everything !

“ In spite of that, from the moment of my arrival at the Schlossgarten, Fridoline had felt an affectionate regard for me, or rather commiseration. Often in the evening, after the hard work of the day, when I sat resting myself beside the kitchen-fire, downcast, with my hands on my knees and thoughtful-eyed, she would enter noiselessly like a fairy, and while Katel was washing up the plates and dishes, would look smilingly at me and whisper :

“ ‘ You are very tired, are you not, Nicklausse ? The weather has been bad to-day. That heavy shower wetted you through. You work very hard, I often think—yes, very hard ; but have patience, my good Nicklausse, a little patience ; as soon as there is another place vacant in the hotel you shall have it. You are not fit to drag a truck ; it wants a stronger and rougher kind of man than you.’

“ And all the time she was speaking she looked at me with eyes so tender, so compassionate, that my heart trembled under their look ; my eyes filled with tears ; I should have liked to throw myself at her feet, to take her hands in mine, and press my sobbing lips upon them. Respect alone restrained me. As to saying to her, ‘ I love

you!"—I should never, never, have dared to do it. And yet Fridoline was to be my wife!"

Here Nicklausse suspended his recital — almost suffocated by emotion. Old Furbach himself indeed felt moved; he watched the good fellow weeping at these sweet memories; these tears of happiness touched him deeply, but he found not a word to say.

At the end of a few minutes, Nicklausse's emotion being somewhat calmed, he went on:

"You can easily imagine, Monsieur Furbach, that during the winter of 1828, which was very long and severe, my fixed idea never left me. Picture to yourself a poor devil, a yoke about his neck, dragging his truck, morning and evening, down and up that immense roadway, that seems endless, between the bank of the Rhine and the terrace above. You know that flight of steps, on which all the winds of Switzerland and Alsatia pour down; how many times did I stop midway to gaze on those vast ruins, with the black cabins beneath, saying to myself: 'The treasure is in the midst of that—somewhere—I don't know where—but it is there! If I had found it, instead of having the rain beating in my face, my feet in the mud, and a rope about my waist, I should be seated before a good table, drinking good wine, and listening to the wind, rain, and hail storm out of doors, while thanking God for his bounties. And—more than all that—I should see a soft face smile on me!'

"These thoughts put me in a fever; my eyes pierced the walls—I probed with a glance the depths of the abyss, I sapped the foundation of every tower, the thickness of which I calculated from that of the upper portions.

"*'Ah!'* cried I to myself, *'I'll find it—I'll find it—I must find it!'*

"A strange sort of attraction always drew my eyes towards the donjon of Gontran the Miser, facing the ascent. It is a tall stone building, crowned with heavy battlements, which stand out in strong relief on the Hunevir side. The donjon of Rodolphe stands close by it. Between the two is hung the drawbridge of the place, these towers forming, as it were, the jambs of a colossal gate.

"One circumstance more than all attached me to the tower of Gontran; it was that, at half its height, on a broad rough-hewn stone, is sculptured a cross surmounted by a helmet, and two gauntlets nailed in place of the Saviour's hands.

"You have not forgotten, Monsieur Furbach, the little cross I used always to carry about me, and which I showed to you the day I left your service; that cross appeared to me like the one on Gontran's tower; the helmet and the gauntlets were alike; and, besides that, every time I passed the tower I was seized with a fit of trembling. I felt overpowered by some strange force; fear

took possession of me, and, in spite of my desire to penetrate this mystery, terror of death made me fly.

“When I was in my chamber in the evening, I looked on myself as a coward, and promised myself to have more courage next day; but the idea of finding myself face to face with beings of an unknown world always overthrew my strongest resolutions.

“More than this, at the foot of this famous tower, in a vault of the *halle des armes*, lived the old ropemaker Zulpick, who from the time of my arrival at Brisach had watched my every action. What did this man want with me? Did he suspect my projects? Was he himself possessed by the same instincts? Had he any clue? I could not divest myself of a vague apprehension on meeting him; between Zulpick and myself there evidently existed some sort of interest. What was its nature? I could not tell, and stood upon my guard.

“For three months I went on dragging my truck without venturing to take any fixed resolution. I became discouraged. It sometimes seemed to me that the spirit of darkness had been laughing at my credulity. I returned every night to the Schlossgarten, weighed down by an indescribable melancholy. Katel and Fridoline did not fail to ask me the cause of my sadness, and promised me better fortune. I was visibly growing thinner every day.

“Winter had come; the cold was excessive, especially in the clear nights, when multitudes of stars filled the sky, and the brilliant moon threw upon the snow the shadows of the great trees, with their thousand interlaced branches.

“Steamboats did not then exist. Large sailing-vessels performed the passenger service; they arrived at eight, nine, ten, eleven o'clock, often at midnight, according as the wind was more or less favourable. I had to wait at the landing-place, in the midst of the bales, the snow slowly falling and covering me like a block of stone; and when the vessel had passed I often returned to the hotel without any luggage, for travellers in the winter are rare.

“One January evening I was sadly wending my way back. As a good deal of snow had fallen my truck made no noise. I had reached midway, and stopped, with my elbows on the low wall, at my usual spot, to gaze at Gontran's Tower. The weather had cleared up. Below me slept the village. The trees, covered with frost and snow, glittered in the moonlight. For a long time I stood looking down at the white roofs, the little dark yards, with their pickaxes, their shovels, their harrows, their ploughs, their bundles of straw hanging to the sheds, their windows, against which the snow had piled itself. Not a sound came up to me, not a breath, and I said to myself: ‘They are all sleeping: they are in no want of treasures! My God! what are we? Is there any need for us to be rich? Do not the rich die, as

well as the poor? Cannot the poor live, loving their wives and children, warming themselves in the sun when it shines, and at the fire-side when the weather is cold, as well as the rich? Do they require to drink the best wine every day to make them happy? And when all have dragged themselves for a few days on earth—to see the sky, the stars, the moon, the blue river, the verdure of the fields and woods; to pluck some fruit from the bushes, to press the grapes, to say to her they love, “You are the most beautiful, the gentlest, the tenderest of women. I shall love for ever!” and to dandle their little ones in their hands, to kiss them, to laugh at their chirping—when they have done all these things—which make up the happiness, the poor happiness, of this world!—do we not all, one after the other, descend, in white robes or in tatters, into the same dark cavern, whence there is no return, and where one knows nothing more of what is passing? Is there any need of treasures, Nicklausse, for all that? Reflect, and calm your mind. Go back to your village; cultivate your little field, your grandmother’s field; marry Grédel, Christine, or Lotchen; gladden the heart of a fat girl, if you like; of a thin and melancholy one, if you prefer it. Heaven knows there is no lack of them! Follow the example of your father and grandfather; go to mass; listen to Monsieur le curé. By following the road other people travel you will come to be blessed, and a hundred years from this time you will have become one of those excellent people whose bones are dug up with respect, and of whom it will be said: “Ah! in those days there were men. Now there are none but scamps to be seen!”

“In this manner in a dreamy mood I leaned on the wall, admiring the silence of the village, the stars, the moon, and the ruins, and mourning for the treasure I could not have.

“But suddenly, after I had been there a few minutes, something moved upon the platform, three hundred feet above. A head slowly came forward, casting a look on the river, the landing-place, and along the steep winding road.

“I ducked down, and, with my truck, disappeared in a turning of the wall.

“It was Zulpick. He was bareheaded, and, as the moon was shining with all its brightness, in spite of the distance, I could see that the old ropemaker was moved by some strange idea. His wan cheeks were indrawn; his large eyes, overhung with white brows, sparkled; yet he appeared calm. After looking in these directions for a long time, he put on his old sable cap, which he had taken off to enable himself to see the better, and descended the steep path by Rudolph’s Tower, and I speedily lost sight of him among the bastions.

“What was he doing in the midst of the ruins at such an hour? The idea suddenly flashed upon my mind that he was seeking for the treasure. Calm as I had been a moment before, I felt a rush of

blood to my face. I slipped the yoke over my shoulders, and ran with all my might, the wheels of my truck making no noise as they passed over the snow. In a few minutes I reached an outhouse belonging to the Schlossgarten, seized a pickaxe, and ran back, following the scent of the old ropemaker. At the end of a quarter of an hour I was in the castle-moat, tracking his footsteps in the snow. I pressed forward so quickly that, suddenly, at the turn of a heap of ruins, I found myself nose to nose with Zulpick, who carried a heavy crowbar, which he tightly grasped with both hands as he looked me in the face. He stood fixed as a statue, and there was a haughtiness in his attitude that astonished me. He might have been taken for an old knight. He took my breath away; but soon recovering myself, I said:

“ ‘Good evening! Monsieur Zulpick. How goes it with you this evening? The cold’s a little sharp.’ ”

“Just then the clock of the old cathedral of Saint Etienne struck midnight, and every grave and solemn stroke of the bell resounded in the bastion. As the last stroke rang out, Zulpick demanded:

“ ‘What have you come here for?’ ”

“ ‘Eh?’ said I, embarrassed. ‘I’ve come for the same purpose as yourself.’ ”

“Then, in a grave tone, he cried:

“ ‘By what right do you lay claim to the treasure of Gontran the Miser? Speak!’ ”

“ ‘Aha!’ I replied; ‘it appears that *you* know——’ ”

“My heart beat violently.

“ ‘Yes, I have read you; I have expected you.’ ”

“ ‘You have expected me?’ ”

“But without answering me, he went on:

“ ‘By what right do you claim anything here?’ ”

“ ‘By what right do *you* claim anything, daddy Zulpick? If there is a treasure, why should it be yours more than mine?’ ”

“ ‘It’s different with me—very different,’ said he; ‘for fifty years I have been in search of it.’ ”

“And placing his hand upon his breast with a convinced air, he added:

“ ‘The treasure is mine. I have acquired it at the cost of blood, and for eight centuries I have been deprived of it.’ ”

“I thought then that he was mad; but guessing what was in my mind, he said:

“ ‘I am not mad! Show me my wealth, since the knowledge of its existence has come to you from on high, and I will give you a good part of it.’ ”

“We were at the foot of Rudolph’s Tower, from which the old ropemaker had been endeavouring to break away one of the stones. A great number of other stones were piled close by.

“ ‘He does not know the place,’ I said to myself. ‘The treasure is not here, I am sure of it. It must be inside of Gontran’s Tower.’

“ And, without replying to his question, I said to him :

“ ‘Courage, daddy Zulpick ! We’ll talk about this matter some other time.’

“ I returned up the road that led to the terrace. While I was going along I recollected that the only entrance into Gontran’s Tower was through the vault inhabited by Zulpick. Turning round, I called to him :

“ ‘We’ll talk about it again to-morrow.’

“ ‘Very well !’ he cried in a loud voice.

“ He followed me for a considerable distance, with bowed head and a downcast air.

“ A few minutes later I was in my bedroom, and lay me down to rest with a feeling of hope and courage such as I had not felt for a long time.

“ That night my dream, which had been growing fainter day by day, reappeared to me with imposing grandeur. It was no longer only the knight stretched upon the bronze cross I saw, but it was a complete, strange, and colossal history that slowly unfolded itself to my eyes. The great bell of the ancient cathedral of Saint Etienne tolled. The heavy red stones of the vast building, its vaults, its arches, and its spires trembled to their granite foundations. An immense crowd, all draped in cloth of gold and jewels, priests and nobles, pressed each other on the platform of Old Brisach, but not the Old Brisach of to-day, with its rubbish, its ruins, and its cottages, but Brisach covered with noble buildings piled up to the clouds. In each embrasure of its wide battlements stood a man-at-arms, his eyes turned towards the dim blue plain ; and along the whole length of the winding road, down to the shore of the Rhine, was a file of shining pikes, halberds, and partisans, reflecting the sunlight like mirrors. Horses stamped, far down the steep road, in dark gateways. Huge sounds rose from the plain. Suddenly transported to the top of a tower, I saw, far off, very far off, advancing on the stream, a long boat covered with a black pall having a great white cross in the middle. Every stroke of the funeral bell resounded from one tower to another, and passed in prolonged echoes into the depths of the ramparts. I comprehended that a great personage, an emperor or prince, was dead ; and, as everybody knelt down, I tried to kneel also, but suddenly all disappeared. I had, no doubt, attempted to turn in my bed. A death-like silence succeeded to the tumult.

“ After that I saw myself again in the vault, looking out of a loop-hole. In front was the drawbridge, Rudolph’s Tower, and on the bridge a sentinel. ‘You have not been deceived, Nicklausse,’ said I to myself. ‘Here, beyond question, is the tower of Gontran the Miser,

and the old duke lies there!" Turning round, I saw the coffin and the old duke. It was not a skeleton, but a corpse dressed in a blue mantle sprinkled with stars and two-headed eagles embroidered in silver. I moved nearer. I looked at the ornaments with ecstasy. The mantle, the sword, the coronet, and the great chalice glittered in the light of a star that twinkled in the embrasure of the loophole. While I was dreaming of the happiness of possessing these riches the old duke slowly opened his eyes, and looked gravely at me.

"'It's you, is it, Nicklausse?' he said, without a muscle of his long visage moving. 'I've been forgotten for a long time in this vault. You are welcome. Take a seat on the edge of my coffin. It's heavy, and won't tumble down.'

"He held out his hand to me, and I could not refuse to take it.

"'God of heaven! how cold dead men's hands are,' said I to myself, shuddering.

"At that moment I woke, and found myself grasping the candlestick on the table by my bedside, the coldness of which had awakened me. The little panes of glass in my windows were white with frost.

"All the rest of the night I did nothing but try to remember my dream. Only the principal circumstances of it remained impressed on my mind; but I soon recovered it entire, real objects serving to recall every detail.

"I had to keep myself patient all that day until evening. On my way down to the landing-place with my truck, at six o'clock, I called at old Zulpick's, and told him that I should be back between eight and nine o'clock, and that then we would have a talk together. He answered me by a nod of the head, and pointed to the entrance to his vault.

"At nine o'clock the passage-boat passed. Towards ten o'clock I was on my way back. As soon as I had put up my truck in the shed, I went to Gontran's Tower. Zulpick was waiting for me. We descended in silence, and from that instant I was convinced that the moment of our great discovery was near, for the stairs down which I was going I remembered as those I had passed down in my dream; but I said nothing about it to Zulpick. On reaching the bottom of the vault all my doubts, if I had still had any, ceased. I recognised the place—the low-arched roof, the old walls, the deal table resting against the loophole, the four round panes of cracked glass, the stump-bed, the bales of rope in one corner; I knew everything in daddy Zulpick's burrow, and already had noted with my eye the flagstone that would have to be raised if we came to an understanding.

"A tin lamp shone on the table; the old ropemaker, without ceremony, sat himself down on a ricketty rush-bottomed chair, the only one in the place, and pointed to a chest, on which I seated myself. Zulpick, with his bald head, two tufts of hair alone remaining just above his

ears, his flat nose, glittering eyes, and pointed chin, looked restless and absorbed; he gazed at me with sombre eyes, and the first words he addressed to me were:

“ ‘The treasure is mine, and I don’t intend to be robbed of it. It is mine; I have won it. I am not a man to allow himself to be despoiled. Do you understand me?’

“ ‘Very good, then,’ I replied, rising; “ ‘since it is yours, keep it.’

“ I made a movement as if to leave the place.

“ Springing from his chair, he seized me by the arm, and grinding his teeth while he spoke, cried:

“ ‘How much do you want?’

“ ‘Half.’

“ ‘Half!’ cried he, ‘it’s abominable!—a robbery.’

“ ‘Keep it all, then.’

“ I mounted one of the stairs.

“ Almost tearing off the tail of my smock-frock, he roared:

“ ‘You know nothing—nothing; you are trying to suck me—to get over me! I shall find it by myself!’

“ ‘Why do you detain me then?’

“ ‘Come, come, sit down,’ said he, with a strange chuckle. ‘Let us see, since you know—what does the treasure consist of?’

“ I re-seated myself.

“ ‘In the first place, there’s the golden coronet with six branches, four large diamonds in each branch, surmounted by the cross.’

“ ‘Yes, there is that.’

“ ‘Then there is the large gold-hilted sword.’

“ ‘True.’

“ ‘The gold cup, with white, red, and yellow pearls.’

“ ‘Yes, yes, there is all that! I remember my cup, my sword, my coronet. They were left with me—I willed it so; but I want to see them again.’

“ ‘Oh if you want to keep them all,’ said I to myself, furious at such selfishness, ‘if you want to keep all to yourself, I shall take myself off.’

“ ‘And once more I was on my way out of the place; but again he seized me by the arm, crying:

“ ‘We may yet come to terms. There’s gold besides, isn’t there?’

“ ‘Yes, the coffin is full of gold pieces.’

“ At these words he became perfectly green, and exclaimed:

“ ‘I keep the gold; you shall have the silver!’

“ ‘But there is no silver!’ I cried; ‘and besides, if there were, I wouldn’t have it. Do you hear?’

“ The old man, in a wild tone, half mad, supplicated and tried to soften me; but it was easy to see that he would have tried to strangle me if he had felt strong enough to do so, and had not stood in need of me.

“ ‘Come,’ said he, ‘listen to me, Nicklausse,—you are a good fellow ; you do not want to rob me. I tell you the treasure belongs to me. For fifty years have I been searching for it. I remember having reached it, long—long ago. I have not wanted to enjoy the sight of it. But what does that matter, since it is mine?’

“ ‘Well, if it is yours, leave me in peace.’

“ ‘You are going to dig it up!’ he roared, springing towards a hatchet.

“ Fortunately I had in my hand my stout iron-pointed stick, having foreseen that things might take an unpleasant turn. I put myself on my guard therefore, and said to him coolly :

“ ‘Daddy Zulpick, I came to you as a friend : you wish to murder me. But have a care, for at the least offensive movement you make I shall split your skull.’

“ He understood me, and, after watching my movements for a moment, and debating with himself as to whether he were the stronger, he put down the hatchet, and said to me in a low tone :

“ ‘You want half?’

“ ‘Yes.’

“ ‘Which half? The gold, the sword, the coronet? Which, which? Say!’

“ ‘We’ll divide the whole into two equal parts, and draw by lot.’

“ He reflected for a moment, and then said :

“ ‘I agree—I *must* agree ; but you are robbing me ; I leave that on your soul. May the devil strangle you ! I can do nothing but accept !’

“ ‘Is it agreed, then?’

“ ‘Haven’t I said I accept?’

“ ‘Yes ; but you must swear on this cross.’

“ I then drew forth my little bronze cross. On seeing it his eyes appeared to be dazzled.

“ ‘Where did you get that?’

“ ‘What’s that to you ! Swear.’

“ ‘Well, I swear—to leave you half.’

“ ‘Equal division by lot.’

“ ‘Yes.’

“ ‘Very well,’ said I, putting back my cross. ‘Now we may arrange matters. In the first place, daddy Zulpick, it is here.’

“ ‘Here! Where?’ he cried, stammering.

“ ‘We must raise this flagstone, and then dig below it. We shall come upon a flight of stairs, and go down fifty steps. At the bottom there is a vault, and in that vault the treasure.’

“ His eyes dilated as he listened to me.

“ ‘How do you know all that?’ he cried.

“ ‘I know it.’

“ ‘Are you sure of it.’

“ ‘I am sure. You shall see.’

“ ‘I went and fetched my pickaxe from the end of the cellar. He bounded towards me crying :

“ ‘Let me raise the stone ! Let me dig out the earth !’

“ ‘Raise the stone and dig out the earth yourself, if you like, daddy Zulpick ; but remember your oath on the cross. You may break your oath once—twice would be too much.’

“ ‘He said nothing, but took the pickaxe and raised the stone.

“ ‘I stood erect near him, with my heavy iron-pointed stick, suspicious of what his madness might lead him to do. Several times I remarked that he cast a rapid glance at me, to see whether I was on my guard. The stone raised, he set to digging with the rapidity of a dog scratching the ground. The perspiration rolled down his back. Once he stopped and said to me :

“ ‘This vault is mine. I’ll go no further. You must take yourself off.’

“ ‘Remember your oath on the cross,’ I replied coolly.

“ ‘He continued his work, repeating at every stroke of the pickaxe, ‘You are robbing me, you are robbing me ; you are a thief—all belongs to me,’ until he had reached the vaulted roof of the stairs. On discovering the first stone, he suddenly became as white as a sheet, and sat down on the heap of earth. But on my attempting to take the pickaxe, he sprang up, stammering :

“ ‘Let it alone !—I—I’ll do it myself—I’ll go down first !’

“ ‘Very well ; go on.’

He went on with the work with a vehemence that left him no time to breathe. Fury was marked in his face. The work advanced, however ; every stroke of the pickaxe now returned a hollow sound ; suddenly a stone fell, and then the rest of the arch sank into the opening with a dull rush. The old ropemaker was in danger of being drawn down with the falling rubbish. Fortunately I seized him and held him back ; but far from thanking me, scarcely had he seen the stairs than, with frightful exasperation, he roared :

“ ‘All belongs to me !’

“ ‘And to me,’ I said drily.

“ ‘I had taken up the lamp ; he demanded it.

“ ‘Very good ; I’d rather have it so. Go on first, Daddy Zulpick.’

“ ‘We descended the stairs.

“ ‘The wavering light of the lamp fell on those vaults, ten centuries old ! The stealthy sound of our steps on the sonorous stairs produced strange effects on me. My heart thumped against my ribs as if it would have broken its way through. I saw before me the bald head, blue-grey neck, and bent back of the old ropemaker. Another in my place might have been tempted by the evil one ; but, thanks to heaven, an

ill thought never came into my mind, Monsieur Furbach. I must tell you that, because death followed us, watching one of us in the shade. Happy are those who have nothing to reproach themselves with, and who leave to the Lord the care of removing his creatures from this lower world ! He has no need of us for this terrible labour.

“ Arrived at the end of the flight of stairs, Zulpick, seeing nothing in the vault, looked at me with haggard eyes ; he tried to speak, but no sound came to his lips. I showed him the ring, let into the middle flagstone ; he understood me, and placing the lamp on the ground, seized the ring with both hands, and uttered a wild roar. The perspiration rolled slowly down our temples ; however, I remained master of myself. Seeing the uselessness of the old man’s efforts :

“ ‘ Let me do it, Zulpick,’ said I to him, ‘ you are not strong enough.’

“ He tried to answer ; at that moment I observed that his lips had become blue.

“ ‘ Sit down and take breath. I’ll not steal your share, be easy on that score.’

“ But he would not sit down, and squatted by the flagstone. And while I raised it by inserting the point of my pickaxe in the interstices of the stone, he tried to keep it in its place by tearing at it with his nails.

“ ‘ Take care !’ I cried, ‘ you’ll get your hands crushed.’

“ Lost trouble ! He did not hear ; the fury of gold possessed him, and the moment the stone was raised, and while all my strength was employed in forcing it back, he slipped below, and I heard him uttering inhuman cries, mingled with strange gaspings.

“ The stone raised, I remained for several seconds as if dazzled ; the glittering of jewels under the rays of the lamp made me giddy. At that moment, with the rapidity of light, all my effaced recollections returned to me. I remembered even what you had said to me at Munich : ‘ But if you had no light, how could you see the coffin, the knight, and the pieces of gold ? Your dream, you see, hasn’t common sense.’ And for an answer to this objection, my eyes sought for some kind of light. It was then that I saw an opening in the wall. On the outside, this resembled one of those massive air-holes found in all ramparts, intended to carry off the humidity of the ground. The pale moon shone in through this aperture, and mingled its blue rays with the yellow rays of our lamp.

“ All that, my dear Monsieur Furbach, is to tell you that at such moments our senses acquire an almost superhuman acuteness ; nothing escapes them, not even the most trivial circumstances.

“ Zulpick had seized the coronet from its mouldy purple cushion and placed it on his head with a superb air. In the same manner he took the sword, then the chalice, and looking at me :

“ ‘Here is the duke,’ he said solemnly, ‘the old duke, Gontran the Miser!’

“And as he lifted a corner of the drapery, now stiff as cardboard, and the gold became visible, the old madman, raising the sword, tried to fell me by a blow on the head; but an indescribable gurgle escaped from his chest, and he sank down, uttering a long-drawn sigh!

“Seized with horror, I held the lamp to his face, and saw that his left temple was blue-black, his eyes turned in their orbits, and that a bloody froth was oozing from his lips.

“ ‘Daddy Zulpick!’ I cried.

“He did not answer.

“I soon comprehended that he had been struck dead by apoplexy! Was it the sight of the gold? Was it for having broken his oath, in refusing me my share of the spoils? Was it because his hour had come, as ours will come? I knew not, and I did not trouble myself about it: fear of being surprised under such circumstances in presence of the body froze my blood. I should certainly have been accused of murdering Zulpick, that poor weak old man, for the purpose of carrying off his property. What was I to do?—make my escape and leave him there. That was my first idea; but while I was ascending the stairs, the distress of losing all those riches I had so long coveted made me go down again. I forced from Zulpick’s hands the sword and the cup, which he held clutched in his stiffened fingers, and replaced them, with the coronet, on the coffin. Then taking Zulpick’s body on my shoulder and the lamp off the ground, I went up to the vault above. There I extended the old ropemaker on his stump-bed, and, after putting back the earth and rubbish, lowered the flagstone into its place. That done, I carefully opened the door of the vault and looked anxiously out. Everybody near was sleeping. It was not yet two o’clock in the morning, the moon spread the broad black shadows of Saint Etienne over the hardened snow. I escaped towards the Schlossgarten, and slipped into my bedroom through the park-entrance.

“Next day all Brisach learned that Zulpick had died of a stroke of apoplexy. He was buried on the following day; the old gossips of the village, the sailors, and the raftsmen, in procession, conducting him to the cemetery.

“For three weeks I continued to drag my truck. At the end of that time the sale, by public auction, of the vault, the stump-bed, and the chair of Zulpick took place; and as I still had by me the 200 florins I had earned in your service, I became the purchaser of all these effects for the sum of three *goulden*, which did not fail to astonish the neighbourhood, Monsieur Durlach included. How could a simple domestic have become possessed of three *goulden*? I showed to Monsieur Durlach the memorandum you had given me, and there

were no more objections on that subject. Very soon, indeed, a report was spread that I was a rich man, who dragged a truck as a penance. Others said that I had disguised myself as a servant for the purpose of buying the ruins of Old Brisach at a low price, and selling them again in one lot to the Emperor of Austria, who proposed to rebuild the castles of the Hapsburgs from bottom to top, in the style of the twelfth century, bringing back the old ritters, chaplains, and bishops. Some, more judicious, inclined to believe that I simply wanted to establish at Brisach a straw-hat manufactory, such as there were in Alsatia.

“From the time of my acquisition, Mademoiselle Fridoline was no longer the same to me; she did not know what to think of all the reports that were circulated concerning me, and appeared more timid, and more reserved than hitherto. I saw her blush at my approach, and when I announced my intention of returning to my own country she became very sad. It even appeared to me the next day that she had been crying, a circumstance pleasant to me; for I had resolved to accomplish my dream entirely, and what remained of it to be done was not the least agreeable part.

“What more is there for me to tell you, Monsieur Furbach? The rest of my story is easily to be guessed. Shut up in my burrow at night, the door well secured, I again went down into the lower vault, and when I saw myself in full possession of the treasure, when I calculated these immense riches, and said to myself that for the future want could never reach me, how can I express to you the feeling of gratitude that took possession of my soul?

“And later, when I had effected at Frankfort the exchange of some hundreds of my gold pieces with Kummer, the banker, who was astonished at the antiquity of the coins, which dated from the time of the Crusades; and when I returned to Old Brisach, like a great personage, on board the *dampfschiff* ‘*Hermann*,’ for the arrival of which I had so many times waited in the snow, how shall I describe to you the astonishment and delight of Fridoline, as, blushing and agitated, she saw me take my seat at the travellers’ table; the affectionate congratulations of Daddy Durlach, and the confusion of Katel, who had been used to treat me with a high hand sometimes, calling me a sluggard, when I appeared to her too melancholy and sighed by the corner of the hearth. Poor Katel! she had done it with the best intentions in the world, shaking me up a little to raise my courage; but now she appeared confused, speechless, and stupefied, at having ill-treated the great personage she saw gravely installed at table, in his dragon-green *witchoura*, lined with sable.

“Ah! Monsieur Furbach, what singular contrasts there are in the world, and how wrong the old proverb is, which says ‘the frock does not make the monk!’ It is useless to abuse money, seeing what a

position it gives a man. I shall never forget that the moment I opened my trunk, and took out my cash-box and opened it on the table, good old Durlach, very prudent by nature, and who, until then, had somewhat doubted the solidity of my opulence, suddenly seeing the gold glitter, very respectfully took off his black silk cap, and said pettishly to Fridoline:

“ ‘Come, Fridoline, bring the armchair for Monsieur Nicklausse: you think of nothing!’

“And when I told him that the dearest of my wishes was to obtain his granddaughter in marriage, he, who a few weeks before would have been indignant at such a proposition, and would very quickly have shown me the door, now appeared to be completely overcome by it.

“ ‘Certainly, certainly, my dear Monsieur Nicklausse! You do us a great honour!’

“He made one condition, however, that I should remain at the Schlossgarten; ‘not wishing,’ he said, ‘that an establishment founded by his grandfather should pass into the hands of strangers.’

“Fridoline, seated in a corner, wept silently.

“And when, kneeling down before her, I asked: ‘Fridoline, do you love me? Fridoline, will you be my wife?’ the poor child was hardly able to reply:

“ ‘You know well, Nicklausse, that I love you!’

“Ah, Monsieur Furbach, such recollections compel us to bless this despicable gold, by whose means alone such happiness is possible!’

Nicklausse paused, and for some time remained meditative, his elbow on the table, his forehead resting on his hand. He appeared to see all the happy and unhappy days of the past defile before his mind’s eye; he was moved to tears. The old bookseller’s head was bowed, and he too sat lost in reveries that were not at all habitual with him.

“My dear friend,” he said suddenly, rising as he spoke, “your story is wonderful; but after reflecting on it, I own I can’t make it out. Can it have been an effect of magnetism, the little cross you showed me at Munich having belonged to Gontran the Miser? Who knows? In any case, I know I shall have frightful dreams to-night.”

Nicklausse made no reply: he had risen from his seat and lighted his old master to his room in silence.

The moon shone on the high windows of the room; it was nearly one o’clock.

The next day Monsieur Furbach went away to Bâle on the *dampfschiff*. He waved his hand from the deck in sign of farewell, and Nicklausse answered him with a wave of his hat.

A Page from the Book of Folly.

"That owned the virtuous ring and glass."

Il Penseroso.

CHAPTER I.

"AURELIA!"

"Otto!"

"Must we then part?"

They were folded in each other's arms. There never was such kissing.

"How shall we henceforth exchange the sweet tokens of our undying affection, my Otto?"

"Alas, my Aurelia, I know not! Thy Otto blushes to acquaint thee that he cannot write."

"Blush not, my Otto, thou needest not reproach thyself. Even couldest thou write, thy Aurelia could not read. O these dark ages!"

They remained some minutes gazing on each other with an expression of fond perplexity. Suddenly the damsel's features assumed the aspect of one who experiences the visitation of a happy thought. Gently yet decidedly she pronounced:

"We will exchange rings."

They drew off their rings simultaneously.

"This, Aurelia, was my grandfather's."

"This, Otto, was my grandmother's, which she charged me with her dying breath never to part with save to him whom alone I loved."

"Mine is a brilliant, more radiant than aught save the eyes of my Aurelia."

And, in fact, Aurelia's eyes hardly sustained the comparison. A finer stone could not easily be found.

"Mine is a sapphire, azure as the everlasting heavens, and type of a constancy enduring as they."

In truth, it was of a tint seldom to be met with in sapphires.

The exchange made, the lady seemed less anxious to detain her lover.

"Beware, Otto," she cried, as he slid down the cord, which yielded him an oscillatory transit from her casement to the moat, where he alighted knee-deep in mud. "Beware!—if my brother should be gazing from his chamber on the resplendent moon!"

But that ferocious young baron was accustomed to spend his time in a less romantic manner; and so it came to pass that Otto encountered him not.

CHAPTER II.

DAYS, weeks, months had passed by, and Otto, a wanderer in a foreign land, had heard no tidings of his Aurelia. Ye who have loved may well conceive how her ring was all in all to him. He divided his time pretty equally between gazing into its cerulean depths, as though her lovely image were mirrored therein, and pressing its chilly surface to his lips, little as it recalled the warmth and balminess of hers.

The burnished glow of gold, the chaste sheen of silver, the dance and sparkle of light in multitudinous gems, arrested his attention as he one evening perambulated the streets of a great city. He beheld a jeweller's shop. The gray-headed, spectacled lapidary sat at a bench within, sedulously polishing a streaked pebble by the light of a small lamp. A sudden thought struck Otto; he entered the shop, and, presenting the ring to the jeweller, inquired in a tone of suppressed exultation :

“What hold you for the worth of this inestimable ring?”

The jeweller, with no expression of surprise or curiosity, received the ring from Otto, held it to the light, glanced slightly at the stone, somewhat more carefully at the setting, laid the ring for a moment in a pair of light scales, and, handing it back to Otto, remarked with a tone and manner of the most entire indifference,

“The worth of this inestimable ring is one shilling and sixpence.”

“Caitiff of a huckster!” exclaimed Otto, bringing down his fist on the bench with such vigour that the pebbles leaped up and fell rattling down: “Sayest thou this of a gem framed by genii in the bowels of the earth?”

“Nay, friend,” returned the jeweller with the same imperturbable air, “that thy gem was framed of earth I in nowise question, seeing that it doth principally consist of sand. But when thou speakest of genii and the bowels of the earth, thou wilt not, I hope, take it amiss if I crave better proof than thy word that the devil has taken to glass-making. For glass, and nothing else, credit me, thy jewel is.”

“And the gold?” gasped Otto.

“There is just as much gold in thy ring as sufficeth to handsomely gild a like superficies of brass, which is not saying much.”

And, applying a sponge dipped in some liquid to a small part of the hoop, the jeweller disclosed the dull hue of the baser metal so evidently that Otto could hardly doubt longer. He doubted no more when the lapidary laid his ring in the scales against another of the same size and make, and pointed to the inequality of the balance.

“Thou seest,” he continued, “that in our craft a very little gold goes a very great way. It is far otherwise in the world, as thou,

albeit in no sort eminent for sapience, hast doubtless ere this ascertained for thyself. Thou art evidently a prodigious fool!"

This latter disparaging observation could be safely ventured upon, as Otto had rushed from the shop, speechless with rage.

Was Aurelia deceiver or deceived? Should he execrate her, or her venerable grandmother, or some unknown person? The point was too knotty to be solved in the agitated state of his feelings. He decided it provisionally by execrating the entire human race, not forgetting himself.

In a mood like Otto's a trifling circumstance is sufficient to determine the quality of action. The ancient city of which he was at the time an inhabitant was traversed by a large river spanned by a quaint and many-arched bridge, to which his frantic and aimless wanderings had conducted him. Spires and gables and lengthy façades were reflected in the water, blended with the shadows of boats, and interspersed with the mirrored flames of innumerable windows on land, or of lanterns suspended from the masts or sterns of the vessels. The dancing ripples bickered and flickered, and seemed to say, "Come hither to us," while the dark reaches of still water in the shadow of the piers promised that whatever might be intrusted to them should be faithfully retained. Swayed by a sudden impulse, Otto drew his ring from his finger. It gleamed an instant aloft in air; in another the relaxation of his grasp would have consigned it to the stream.

"Forbear!"

Otto turned, and perceived a singular figure by his side. The stranger was tall and thin, and attired in a dusky cloak which only partially concealed a flame-coloured jerkin. A cock's feather peaked up in his cap; his eyes were piercingly brilliant; his nose was aquiline; the expression of his features sinister and sardonic. Had Otto been more observant, or less preoccupied, he might have noticed that the stranger's left shoe was of a peculiar form, and that he limped some little with the corresponding foot.

"Forbear, I say; thou knowest not what thou doest."

"And what skills what I do with a piece of common glass?"

"Thou errest, friend; thy ring is not common glass. Had thy mistress surmised its mystic virtues, she would have thought oftener than twice ere exchanging it for thy diamond."

"What may these virtues be?" eagerly demanded Otto.

"In the first place, it will show thee when thy mistress may chance to think of thee, as it will then prick thy finger."

"Now I know thee for a lying knave," exclaimed the youth indignantly. "Learn, to thy confusion, that it hath not pricked me once since I parted from Aurelia."

"Which proves that she has never once thought of thee."

"Villain!" shouted Otto, "say that again, and I will transfix thee."

"Thou mayest if thou canst," rejoined the stranger, with an expression of such cutting scorn that Otto's spirit quailed, and he felt a secret but overpowering conviction of his interlocutor's veracity. Rallying, however, in some measure, he exclaimed:

"Aurelia is true! I will wager my soul upon it!"

"Done!" screamed the stranger in a strident voice of triumph, while a burst of diabolical laughter seemed to proceed from every cranny of the eaves and piers of the old bridge, and to be taken up by goblin echoes from the summits of the adjacent towers and steeples.

Otto's blood ran chill, but he mustered sufficient courage to inquire hoarsely:

"What of its further virtues?"

"When it shall have pricked thee," returned the mysterious personage, "on turning it once completely round thy finger thou wilt see thy mistress wherever she may be. If thou turnest it the second time, thou wilt know what her thought of thee is; and, if the third time, thou wilt find thyself in her presence. But I give thee fair warning that by doing this thou wilt place thyself in a more disastrous plight than any thou hast experienced hitherto. And now farewell."

The speaker disappeared. Otto stood alone upon the bridge. He saw nothing around him but the stream, with its shadows and lights, as he slowly and thoughtfully turned round to walk to his lodgings.

CHAPTER III.

YE who have loved, et cetera, as aforesaid, will comprehend the anxiety with which Otto henceforth consulted his ring. He was continually adjusting it to his finger in a manner, as he fancied, to render the anticipated puncture more perceptible when it should come at last. He would have worn it on all his fingers in succession had the conformation of his robust hand admitted of its being placed on any but the slenderest. Thousands of times he could have sworn that he felt the admonitory sting; thousands of times he turned the trinket round and round with desperate impatience; but Aurelia's form remained as invisible, her thoughts as inscrutable, as before. His great dread was that he might be pricked in his sleep, on which account he would sit up watching far into the morn. For, as he reasoned, not without plausibility, when could he more rationally hope for a place in Aurelia's thoughts than at that witching and suggestive period? She might surely think of him when she had nothing else to do! Had she really nothing else to do? And Otto grew sick and livid with jealousy. It of course frequently occurred to him to doubt and deride the virtues of the ring, and he was several times upon the point of flinging it away. But the more he pondered upon the appearance and manner

of the stranger, the less able he felt to resist the conviction of his truthfulness.

At last a most unmistakable puncture! the distinct, though slight, pang of a miniature wound. A crimson bead of blood rose on Otto's finger, swelled to its due proportion, and became a trickling blot.

"She is thinking of me!" cried he rapturously, as if this were an instance of the most signal and unforeseen condescension. All the weary expectancy of the last six months was forgotten. He would have railed at himself had the bliss of the moment allowed him to remember that he had ever railed at her.

Otto turned his ring once, and Aurelia became visible in an instant. She was standing before the mercer's booth in the chief street of the little town which adjoined her father's castle. Her gaze was riveted on a silk mantle, trimmed with costly furs, which depended from a hook inside the doorway. Her lovely features wore an expression of extreme dissatisfaction. She was replacing a purse, apparently by no means weighty, in her embroidered girdle.

Otto turned the ring the second time, and Aurelia's silvery accents immediately became audible to the following effect:

"If that fool Otto were here, he would buy it for me."

She turned away, and walked down the street. Otto uttered a cry like the shriek of an uprooted mandrake. His hand was upon the ring to turn it for the third time; but the stranger's warning occurred to him, and for a moment he forbore. In that moment the entire vision vanished from before his eyes.

What boots it to describe Otto's feelings upon this revelation of Aurelia's sentiments? For lovers, description would be needless; to wiser people, incomprehensible. Suffice it to say, that as his lady deemed him a fool he appeared bent on proving that she did not deem amiss.

A long space of time elapsed without any further admonition from the ring. Perhaps Aurelia had no further occasion for his purse; perhaps she had found another pursebearer. The latter view of the case appeared the more plausible to Otto, and it hugely aggravated his torments.

At last the moment came. It was the hour of midnight. Again Otto felt the sharp puncture, again the ruby drop started from his finger, again he turned the ring, and again beheld Aurelia. She was in her chamber, but not alone. Her companion was a youth of Otto's age. She was in the act of placing Otto's brilliant upon his finger. Otto turned his own ring, and heard her utter, with singular distinctness:

"This ring was given me by the greatest fool I ever knew. Little did he imagine that it would one day be the means of procuring me liberty, and bliss in the arms of my Arnold. My venerable grandmother——"

The voice expired upon her lips, for Otto stood before her.

Arnold precipitated himself from the window, carrying the ring with him. Otto, glaring at his faithless mistress, stood in the middle of the apartment with his sword unsheathed. Was he about to use it? None can say; for at this moment the young Baron burst into the room, and, without the slightest apology for the liberty he was taking, passed his sword through Otto's body.

Otto groaned, and fell upon his face. He was dead. The young Baron ungently reversed the position of the corpse, and scanned its features with evident surprise and dissatisfaction.

"It is not Arnold, after all!" he muttered. "Who would have thought it?"

"Thou seeest, brother, how unjust were thy suspicions," observed Aurelia, with an air of injured but not implacable virtue. "As for this abominable ravisher——" Her feelings forbade her to proceed.

The brother looked mystified. There was something beyond his comprehension in the affair; yet he could not but acknowledge that Otto was the person who had rushed by him as he lay in wait upon the stairs. He finally determined that it was best to say nothing about the matter; a resolution the easier of performance as he was not wont to be lavish of his words at any time. He wiped his sword on his sister's curtains, and was about to withdraw, when Aurelia again spoke:

"Ere thou departest, brother, have the goodness to ring the bell, and desire the menials to remove this carrion from my apartment."

The young Baron sulkily complied, and retreated growling to his chamber.

The attendants carried Otto's body forth. To the honour of her sex be it recorded, that before this was done Aurelia vouchsafed one glance to the corpse of her old lover. Her eye fell on the brazen ring. "And he has actually worn it all this time!" thought she.

"Would have outraged my daughter, would he?" said the old Baron, when the transaction was reported to him. "Let him be buried in a concatenation accordingly."

"What the guy dickens be a concatenation, Geoffrey?" interrogated Giles.

"Methinks it is Latin for a ditch," responded Geoffrey.

This interpretation commending itself to the general judgment of the retainers, Otto was interred in the shelving bank of the old moat, just under Aurelia's window. A rough stone was laid upon the grave. The magic ring, which no one thought worth appropriating, remained upon the corpse's finger. Thou mayest probably find it there, reader, if thou searchest long enough.

The first visitor to Otto's humble sepulchre was, after all, Aurelia herself, who alighted thereon the following night after letting herself

down from her casement to fly with Arnold. Their escape was successfully achieved upon a pair of excellent horses, the proceeds of Otto's diamond, which had become the property of a Jew.

On the third night an aged monk stood by Otto's grave, and wept plentifully. He carried a lantern, a mallet, and a chisel. "He was my pupil," sobbed the good old man. "It were meet to contribute what in me lies to the befitting perpetuation of his memory."

Setting down the lantern, he commenced work, and with pious toil engraved on the stone in the Latin of the period:

"HAC MAGNUS STULTUS JACET IN FOSSA SEPULTUS.
MULIER CUI CREDIDIT MORTUUM ILLUM REDDIDIT."

Here he paused, at the end of his strength and of his Latin.

"Beshrew my old arms and brains!" he sighed.

"Hem!" coughed a deep voice in his vicinity.

The monk looked up. The personage in the dusky cloak and flame-coloured jerkin was standing over him.

"Good monk," said the fiend, "what dost thou here?"

"Good fiend," said the monk, "I am inscribing an epitaph to the memory of a departed friend. Thou mightest kindly aid me to complete it."

"Truly," rejoined the demon, "it would become me to do so, seeing that I have his soul here in my pocket. Thou wilt not expect me to employ the language of the Church. Nathless, I see not wherefore the vernacular may not serve as well."

And, taking the mallet and chisel, he completed the monk's inscription with the supplementary legend:

"SERVED HIM RIGHT."

The Child-Stealer.

By MM. ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN.

I.

IN 1815, there was daily to be seen, wandering in the Hesse-Darmstadt quarter of Mayence, a tall emaciated woman, with hollow cheeks and haggard eyes; a frightful picture of madness. This unfortunate woman, named Christine Evig, a mattress-maker living in the narrow street called Petit Volet, at the back of the cathedral, had lost her reason through the occurrence of a terrible event.

Passing one evening along the winding street of the Trois Bateaux, leading her little daughter by the hand, and suddenly observing that she had for a moment let go of the child, and that she no longer heard the sound of its steps, the poor woman turned and called:

“Deubche! Deubche! where are you?”

Nobody answered, and the street, as far as she could see, was deserted.

Then running, crying, calling, she returned to the port, and peered into the dark water lying beneath the vessels.

Her cries and moans drew the neighbours about her; the poor mother explained to them her agonies. They joined her in making fresh search, but nothing, not a trace, not an indication, was discovered to throw light on this frightful mystery.

From that time Christine Evig had never again set foot in her home; night and day she wandered through the town, crying, in a voice growing feebler and more plaintive: “Deubche! Deubche.”

She was pitied; good people supported her, gave her food, sometimes one, sometimes another, and dressed her in their cast-off clothes. And the police, in presence of a sympathy so general, did not think it their duty to interfere and shut Christine up in a madhouse, as was usual at that period.

She was left therefore to go about as she liked, without any one troubling himself concerning her ways.

But what gave to the misfortune of Christine a truly sinister character was that the disappearance of her little daughter had been as it were the signal for several events of the same kind; a dozen children disappeared in an astonishing and inexplicable manner, and several of these children belonged to the upper rank of towns-people.

These events usually occurred at nightfall, when the street-passengers were few, and every one of them was hastening home from

business. A wilful child went out to the doorstep of its parent's house, its mother calling to it, "Karl!" "Ludwig!" "Lotelé!"—absolutely like poor Christine. No answer! They rushed in every direction; the whole neighbourhood was ransacked; it was all over!

To describe to you the inquiries of the police, the arrests that were made, the perquisitions, the terror of families, would be a thing impossible.

Seeing one's child die is, doubtless, frightful; but to lose it without knowing what has become of it, to think that one will never know it again, that the poor little being, so feeble and tender, one has pressed to one's heart with so much love, is ill perhaps—it may be, calling for us, and we unable to help it—this passes all imagination—exceeds the power of human expression to convey it.

Now one evening in the October of that year, 1817, Christine Evig, after having strayed about the streets, had gone and seated herself on the trough of the Bishop's Fountain, her long gray hair hanging about her face, and her eyes wandering as in the midst of a dream.

The servant-girls of the neighbourhood, instead of stopping to chat as usual about the fountain, made haste to fill their pitchers and regain their masters' houses.

The poor mad-woman alone stayed there, motionless, under the icy shower in which the Rhine mist was falling. The high houses around, with their sharp gables, their latticed windows, their innumerable dormer-lights, were slowly becoming enveloped in darkness.

The Bishop's Chapel clock struck seven, but Christine did not move, but still sat shivering and murmuring, "Deubche! Deubche!"

But at that moment, while the pale hue of twilight yet lingered on the points of the roofs before finally disappearing, she suddenly shuddered from head to foot, stretched forward her neck, and her face, impassible for nearly two years, was lit with such an expression of intelligence, that Counsellor Trumf's servant, who was at the moment holding her pitcher to the spout, turned in astonishment at seeing this gesture of the mad-woman's.

At the same moment, a woman, with downbent head, passed along the pavement at the other side of the square, holding in her arms something that was struggling with her, enveloped in a piece of linen cloth.

Seen through the rain this woman was of striking aspect; she was hurrying away like a thief who has succeeded in effecting a robbery, dragging her rags behind her, and slinking in the shadow.

Christine Evig had extended her shrunken left hand, and a few inarticulate words fell from her lips; but suddenly a piercing cry escaped from her bosom:

"It is she!"

And bounding across the square, in less than a minute she reached the corner of the Rue des Vieilles Ferrailles, where the woman had passed out of her sight.

But there Christine stopped, breathless ; the stranger was lost in the darkness of that filthy place, and nothing was to be heard but the monotonous sound of the water falling from the house-gutters.

What had passed through the mad-woman's mind ? What had she remembered ? Had she had some vision—one of those flashes of soul that for a moment unshroud to us the dark depths of the past ? I do not know.

By whatever means, she had recovered her reason.

Without losing a moment in pursuing the vanished apparition, the unfortunate woman hurried up the Rue des Trois Bateaux as if carried along by vertigo, turning at the corner of the Place Gutenberg, rushed into the hall of the provost, Kasper Schwartz, crying in a hissing voice :

“ Monsieur le Provost, the child-stealers are discovered ! Ah, quick ! Listen ! listen ! ”

The Provost was just finishing his evening meal. He was a grave, methodical man, liking to take his ease after supper. Thus the sight of this phantom greatly disturbed him, and, setting down the cup of tea he was in the act of raising to his lips, he cried :

“ Good God ! am I not to have a single moment's quiet during the day ? Can there possibly be a more unfortunate man than I am ? What does this mad-woman want with me now ? Why was she allowed to come in ? ”

Recovering her calmness at these words, Christine replied in a suppliant manner :

“ Ah, monsieur ! you ask if there is a being more unfortunate than yourself ; look at me—look at me ! ”

Her voice was broken with tears ; her clenched hands put aside the long gray hair from her pale face. She was terrible to see.

“ Mad !—yes, my God ! I have been mad ; the Lord, in his mercy, hid from me my misfortune ; but I am mad no longer. Oh, what I have seen ! That woman was carrying off a child—for it was a child ; I am sure of it.”

“ Go to the devil, with your woman and child !—go to the devil ! ” cried the Provost. Seeing the unfortunate woman throw herself upon her knees, “ Hans ! Hans ! ” he cried, “ will you come and turn this woman out of doors ? To the devil with the office of provost ! It brings me nothing but annoyance.”

The servant appeared, and Monsieur Karl Schwartz pointed to Christine :

“ Show her out,” he said. “ To-morrow I shall certainly draw up a warrant in due form, to rid the town of this unfortunate creature. Thank Heaven, we have madhouses.”

The mad-woman laughed drearily, while the servant, full of pity for her, took her by the arm and said gently to her :

“Come, Christine—come.”

She had relapsed into madness, and murmured :

“Deubche !—Deubche !”

II.

WHILE these things were passing in the house of the Provost, Kasper Schwartz, a carriage came down the Rue d’Arsenal ; the sentinel on guard before the shot-park, recognising the equipage as that of Count Diderich, colonel of the Imperial regiment of Hilbourighausen, carried arms ; a salute answered him from the interior of the vehicle.

The carriage, drawn at full speed, seemed as if going towards the Porte d’Allemagne, but it took the Rue de l’Homme de Fer, and stopped before the door of the Provost’s house.

The Colonel, in full uniform, descended, raised his eyes, and appeared stupefied, for the shocking laughter of the mad-woman made itself heard outside of the house.

Count Diderich was a man about five-and-thirty or forty years of age, tall, with brown beard and hair, and a severe and energetic physiognomy.

He entered the Provost’s hall abruptly, saw Hans leading Christine, and, without waiting to have himself announced, walked into Monsieur Schwartz’s dining-room, exclaiming :

“Monsieur, the police of your district is intolerable ! Twenty minutes since I stopped in front of the cathedral, at the moment of the Angelus. As I descended from my carriage, seeing the Countess of Hilbourighausen coming down the steps, I moved on one side to allow her to pass, and I then found that my son—a child of three years old, who had been seated by my side—had disappeared. The carriage-door on the side towards the bishop’s house was open : advantage was taken of the moment I was engaged in lowering the steps to carry off the child ! All the search and inquiries of my people have been fruitless. I am in despair, monsieur !—in despair !”

The Colonel’s agitation was extreme ; his dark eyes flashed like lightning through the tears he tried to repress ; his hand clasped the hilt of his sword.

The Provost appeared to be dumbfounded ; his apathetic nature was distressed at the idea of having to rise and pass the night in giving orders, and himself to go about from place to place,—in short, to recommence, for the hundredth time, the always unsuccessful search.

He would rather have put off the business till the next day.

“Monsieur,” replied the Colonel, “understand that I will not be trifled with. You shall answer for my son with your head. It is

your place to watch over the public security—you fail in your duty—it's scandalous! Oh, that I at least knew who has struck the blow!"

While pronouncing these incoherent words, he paced up and down the room, with clenched teeth and sombre looks.

Perspiration stood on the purple brow of Master Schwartz, who murmured, as he looked at the plate before him:

"I'm very sorry, monsieur—very sorry; but this is the tenth!—the thieves are much more clever than my detectives. What would you have me do?"

At this imprudent response the Colonel bounded with rage, and seizing the fat provost by the shoulders, dragged him out of his arm-chair.

"What would I have you do? Is that the answer you give to a father who comes to demand of you his child?"

"Let me go, monsieur!—let me go!" roared the Provost, stifling with alarm. "In heaven's name, calm yourself! A woman—a mad-woman—Christine Evig, has just been here—she told me—yes, I remember—Hans! Hans!"

The servant, who had overheard all at the key-hole, entered the room instantly.

"Monsieur?"

"Fetch back the mad-woman."

"She's still outside, monsieur."

"Well, bring her in. Pray sit down, Colonel."

Count Diderich remained standing in the middle of the room, and a moment afterwards Christine Evig returned, haggard, and laughing insanely, as she had gone out.

Hans and a servant girl, curious as to what was passing, stood in the open doorway open-mouthed. The Colonel, with a commanding gesture, made a sign to them to go away, then, crossing his arms in front of Master Schwartz, he cried:

"Well, monsieur, what kind of intelligence do you expect to obtain from this unfortunate creature?"

The Provost moved, as if he were going to speak; his fat cheeks shook.

The mad-woman uttered a sort of sobbing laughter.

"Monsieur," said the Provost at length, "this woman's case is the same as your own; two years ago she lost her child, and that drove her mad."

The Colonel's eyes overflowed with tears.

"Go on," he said.

"When she came here a little while ago she appeared to have recovered a spark of reason, and told me——"

Master Schwartz paused.

"What did she tell you, monsieur?"

"That she had seen a woman carrying a child."

"Ah!"

"Thinking that she was only raving, I sent her away."

The colonel smiled bitterly.

"You sent her away?" he cried.

"Yes; she seemed to me to have relapsed into her state of madness."

"*Parbleu!*" cried the Count, in a tone of thunder, "you refuse assistance to this unfortunate woman? You drive away from her her last gleam of hope, instead of sustaining and defending her, as it is your duty to do? And you dare to retain your office!—you dare to receive the emoluments!"

He went up close to the Provost, whose wig trembled, and added, in a low concentrated tone:

"You are a scoundrel! If I do not recover my child, I'll kill you like a dog."

Master Schwartz, his staring eyes nearly starting from his head, his hands helplessly open, his mouth clammy, said not a word; terror held him by the throat; and besides, he knew not what to answer.

Suddenly the Colonel turned his back on him, and going to Christine, looked at her for a few seconds, then, raising his voice,

"My good woman," he said, "try and answer me. In the name of God—in the name of your child—where did you see that woman?"

He paused, and the poor woman murmured in a plaintive voice:

"Deubche!—Deubche!—they have killed her!"

The Count turned pale, and carried away by terror, seized the mad woman's hand.

"Answer me, unfortunate creature!—answer me!" he cried.

He shook her; Christine's head fell back; she uttered a peal of frightful laughter, and said:

"Yes—yes—it is done!—the wicked woman has killed it!"

The Count felt his knees giving way, and sank rather than sat down upon a chair, his elbows upon the table, his pale face between his hands, his eyes fixed, as if gazing upon some fearful scene.

The minutes passed slowly in silence.

The clock struck ten; the sound made the Colonel start. He rose, opened the door, and Christine went out.

"Monsieur," said Master Schwartz.

"Hold your tongue!" interrupted the Colonel, with a withering look.

And he followed the mad-woman down the dark street.

A singular idea had come into his mind.

"All is lost," he said to himself; "this unhappy woman cannot reason, cannot comprehend questions put to her; but she has seen something—her instinct may lead her."

It is almost needless to add that the Provost was amazed. The worthy magistrate lost not a moment in double-locking his door; that done, he was carried away by a noble indignation.

"A man like me threatened!—seized by the collar! Aha, Colonel! we'll see whether there are any laws in this country! To-morrow morning I shall address a complaint to the Grand Duke, and expose to him the conduct of his officers," &c., &c.

III.

MEANWHILE the Colonel followed the mad-woman, and by a strange effect of the surperexcitation of his senses, saw her in the darkness, through the mist, as plainly as in broad daylight; he heard her sighs, her confused words, in spite of the continual hiss of the autumn winds pouring through the deserted streets.

A few late towns-people, the collars of their coats raised to the level of their ears, their hands in their pockets, and their hats pressed down over their eyes, passed, at infrequent intervals, along the pavements; doors were heard to shut with a crash, an ill-fastened shutter banged against a wall, a tile torn from a house-top by the wind fell into the street; then, again, the immense torrent of air whirled on its course, drowning with its lugubrious voice all other sounds of the night.

It was one of those cold nights at the end of October, when the weathercocks, shaken by the north wind, turn giddily on the high roofs, and cry with shrilly voices, "Winter!—Winter!—Winter is come!"

On reaching the wooden bridge Christine leaned over the pier and looked down into the dark muddy water that dragged itself along in the canal; then, rising with an uncertain air, she went on her way, shivering and murmuring:

"Oh! oh!—it's cold!"

The Colonel, clutching the folds of his cloak with one hand, pressed the other against his heart, which felt almost ready to burst.

Eleven o'clock was struck by the church of St. Ignatius, then midnight.

Christine Evig still went on; she had gone through the narrow streets of l'Imprimerie, of the Maillet, of the Halle aux Vins, of the Vieilles Boucheries, and of the Fosses de l'Evêché.

A hundred times, in despair, the Count had said to himself that this nocturnal pursuit would lead to nothing; but, remembering that it was his last resource, he followed her as she went from place to place, stopping, now by a corner-stone, now in the recess of a wall, then continuing her uncertain course—absolutely like a homeless brute wandering at hazard in the darkness.

At length, towards one o'clock in the morning, Christine came once more into the Place de l'Evêché. The weather appeared to have cleared up somewhat; the rain no longer fell, a fresh wind swept the streets, and the moon, now and then surrounded by dark clouds, now and then shining in full brilliancy, shed its rays, smooth and cold as blades of steel, upon the thousand pools of water lying in the hollows of the paving-stones.

The mad-woman tranquilly seated herself on the edge of the fountain, in the place she had occupied some hours before. For a long time she remained in the same attitude, with dull eyes, and her rags clinging to her withered form.

All the Count's hopes had vanished.

But, at one of those moments when the moon, breaking through the clouds, threw its pale light upon the silent edifices, she rose suddenly, stretched forward her neck, and the Colonel, following the direction of her gaze, observed that it was plunged into the narrow lane of the Vieilles Ferrailles, about two hundred paces distant from the fountain.

At the same moment she darted forward like an arrow.

The Count followed instantly upon her steps, plunging into the block of tall old buildings that overlook the church of St. Ignatius.

The mad-woman seemed to have wings; ten times he was on the point of losing her, so rapid was her pace through these winding lanes, encumbered with carts, dung-heaps, and faggots piled before the doors on the approach of winter.

Suddenly she disappeared into a sort of blind alley, pitch-dark, and the Colonel was obliged to stop, not knowing how to proceed further.

Fortunately, after a few seconds, the sickly yellow rays of a lamp pierced the darkness of the depths of this filthy hole, through a small cracked window-pane; this light was stationary, but now and then it was momentarily obscured by some intervening figure.

Some one was evidently awake in the lane.

What was being done?

Without hesitation the Colonel went straight towards the light.

In the midst of the obstructions he found the mad-woman, standing in the mire, her eyes staring, her mouth open, looking at the solitary light.

The appearance of the Count did not seem at all to surprise her; only, pointing to the window on the first floor in which the light was seen, she said: "It's there!" in an accent so impressive that the Count started.

Under the influence of this impulsion he sprang towards the door of the house, and with one pressure of his shoulder burst it open. Impenetrable darkness filled the place.

The mad-woman was close behind him.

"Hush!" she cried.

And, once more giving way to the unfortunate woman's instinct, the Count remained motionless and listened.

The profoundest silence reigned in the house; it might have been supposed that everybody in it was either sleeping or dead.

The clock of St. Ignatius struck two.

A faint whispering was then heard on the first floor, then a vague light appeared on a crumbling wall at the back; boards creaked above the Colonel, and the light came nearer and nearer, falling first upon a ladder-staircase, a heap of old iron in a corner, a pile of wood; further on, upon a sash-window looking out into a yard, bottles right and left, a basket of rags—a dark, ruinous, and hideous interior.

At last a tin lamp with a smoky wick, held by a small hand, as dry and sinewy as the claw of a bird of prey, was slowly projected over the stair-rail, and above the light appeared the head of an anxious-looking woman, with hair the colour of tow, bony cheeks, tall ears standing almost straight out from the head, light-gray eyes glittering under deep brows; in short, a sinister being, dressed in a filthy petticoat, her feet in old shoes, her fleshless arms bare to the elbows, holding a lamp in one hand and in the other a sharp slater's hatchet.

Scarcely has this abominable being plunged her eyes into the darkness than she rushed back up the stairs with astonishing agility.

But it was too late: the Colonel had bounded after her, sword in hand, and seized the old witch by the petticoat.

"My child, wretch!" he cried; "my child!"

At this roar of the lion the hyæna turned and struck at random with her hatchet.

A frightful struggle ensued; the woman, thrown down upon the stairs, tried to bite; the lamp, which had fallen on the ground, burned there, its wick sputtering in the damp and throwing changing shadows on the dusky wall.

"My child!" repeated the Colonel; "my child, or I'll kill you!"

"You—yes, you shall have your child," replied the breathless woman in an ironical tone. "Oh! it's not finished—not—I've good teeth—the coward, to—to strangle me! Ho!—above, there!—are you deaf?—let me go—I'll—I'll tell you all."

She was nearly exhausted, when another witch, older and more haggard, tottered down the stairs, crying:

"I'm here!"

The wretch was armed with a large butcher's knife, and the Count, as he raised his eyes, saw that she was selecting a place in which to strike him between the shoulders.

He thought himself lost; a providential accident alone could save him.

The mad-woman, until then a motionless spectator, sprang upon the old woman, crying:

"It is she!—there she is! Oh, I recognise her!—she shall not escape me!"

The only answer was a gush of blood, which inundated the landing-place; the old woman had cut the unfortunate Christine's throat.

It was the work of a second.

The Colonel had time to spring to his feet and put himself on guard; seeing which the two frightful old women fled rapidly up the stairs and disappeared in the darkness.

The flame of the smoky lamp flickered in the oil, and the Count took advantage of its last rays to follow the murderers. But on reaching the top of the stairs prudence counselled him not to abandon this point of egress.

He heard Christine breathing below, and drops of blood fell from stair to stair in the midst of the silence. It was horrible!

On the other hand, a strange sound of disturbance at the back of the den made the Count fear that the two women were attempting to escape by the windows.

Ignorance of the place had for a moment prevented his moving from the spot on which he was standing, when a ray of light shining through a glass-door allowed him to see the two windows of a room looking into the alley lit by a light from without. At the same time he heard, in the alley, a loud voice call out:

"Hallo!—what's going on here? A door open!"

"Come this way!—come this way!" cried the Colonel.

At the same moment the light gleamed inside of the house.

"Ah!" cried the voice, "blood! The devil!—I can't be mistaken—it's Christine!"

"Come here!" repeated the Colonel.

A heavy step sounded on the stairs, and the hairy face of the watchman, Sélég, with his big otter-skin cap, and his goat-skin over his shoulders, appeared at the head of the stairs, directing the light of his lantern towards the Count.

The sight of the uniform astonished the good fellow.

"Who's there?" he inquired.

"Come up, my good fellow, come up!"

"Pardon, Colonel—but, down below, there's——"

"Yes—a woman has been killed; her murderers are in this house."

The watchman ascended the few remaining stairs, and, holding up his lantern, lit the place; it was a landing about six feet square, on to which opened the door of the room in which the two women had taken refuge. A ladder on the left hand, leading up to the garret-story, still further contracted the space.

The Count's paleness astonished Sélég. However, he dared not question the Colonel, who asked:

"Who lives here?"

"Two women—a mother and daughter; they are called about the market, the Jösels. The mother sells butchers' meat in the market, the daughter makes sausage meat."

The Count, recalling the words uttered by Christine in her delirium—"Poor child!—they have killed it!"—was seized with giddiness, and a cold perspiration burst from his forehead.

By the most frightful chance he discovered, at the same instant, behind the stairs, a little Scotch tunic with blue and red checks, a pair of small shoes, and a black cap, thrown there out of the light. He shuddered, but an invincible power urged him on to look—to contemplate with his own eyes; he approached, therefore, trembling from head to foot, and with a faltering hand raised these articles of dress.

They had belonged to his child!

Some drops of blood stained his fingers.

Heaven knows what passed in the Count's heart. For a long while, leaning for support against the wall, with fixed eyes, arms hanging helplessly by his side, and open mouth, he remained as if stunned. But suddenly he sprang against the door with a yell of fury that terrified the watchman. Nothing could have resisted such a shock. Within the room was heard the crashing of the furniture which the two women had piled up to barricade the entrance; the building shook to its foundation. The Count disappeared into the obscurity; then came shrieks, wild cries, imprecations, hoarse clamours, from the midst of the darkness.

There was nothing human in it; it was as if wild beasts were tearing each other to pieces in the recesses of their den!

The alley filled with people. The neighbours from all sides waded into the mire, inquiring:

"What's the matter? Are they murdering one another here?"

Suddenly all became silent, and the Count, covered with wounds from a knife, his uniform in tatters, came down the stairs, his sword red to the hilt; even his moustaches were blood-stained, and those who saw him might have thought that he had been fighting in the manner of tigers.

* * * * *

What more is there for me to tell you?

Colonel Diderich was cured of his wounds, and disappeared from Mayence.

The authorities of the town considered it judicious to keep these abominable details from the parents of the victims; I learned them from the watchman Sélig himself, after he had become old, and retired to his village near Saarbrück. He alone knew these details, having acted as witness at the secret inquiry which was instituted before the criminal tribunal of Mayence.

Take away from man his *moral sense*, and his reason, of which he is proud, will not preserve him from the most infamous passions.

The Enchantress of Syracuse.

Πᾶ μοι ταὶ δάφναι, φέρε Θέστυλι 'πᾶ δὲ τα φίλτρα.
THEOCRITUS.

My philtres¹ and my love-charms—where are they? Bring them now—

Bring them quickly to me, Thestylis! Bring the sacred laurel bough!
And bring with thee the boxen bowl, crowned high with crimson wool:
For my wearied soul is sinking, and my heart with grief is full.
The youth I loved so dearly, and who pledged his love to me,
For twelve long bitter days and nights has not been here to see
If sick or dead I be, nor once has crossed my cottage door;
And I'm resolved by magic spells to win him back once more.
O cruel, cruel God of Love! thrice cruel Venus! say,
Why have you both beguiled my love—why led his heart astray?
To seek him on the morrow I will rise at early morn,
And on to distant Syracuse I'll wend my way forlorn.
There amidst the noble wrestlers, when his beauteous form I see,
In tears I will upbraid him for his cruel scorn of me.
But whilst thy rite I keep to-night, chaste sovereign of the sky,²
Look down on it propitious from thy glorious throne on high!
And thou at whom the scar'd whelp howls, upon thy nightly round
O'er dank foul graves, and battlefields where carnage heaps the
ground—

Oh Hecatè! Dread Hecatè! Infernal Goddess, hail!
Turn hither from thy ghastly path! Oh, come, and do not fail,
As I the fearful potion mix, throughout to lend thine aid,
And make it full as maddening as Circe ever made,

¹ “Your vessels and your spells provide
Your charms and everything beside!”
Hecatè, to the Witches, in *Macbeth*.

² The Moon and Hecatè were always the presiding goddesses over classic witch scenes:

“Carmina vel cælo possunt deducere Lunam.”—Virgil's *Eclogues*, viii.

“When our dame Hecatè
Made it her gaing night over the kirk-yard,
With all the barking parish tikes set at her,
While I sat whirling of my brazen spindle.”

Ben Jonson's *Sad Shepherd*.

As fierce Medea ever mixed, to sate her vengeful greed,
 Or, enchantress of the yellow hair, Sicilian Perimede.¹
 Roll round, roll round, my magic wheel!² Roll round and round
 amain!

And hither draw—oh, draw to me—my own love back again!

But first of all, in rapid round whilst turns the magic wheel,
 We'll sprinkle o'er the rising flames the new-ground barley-meal.³
 Quick, quick! Slow wretched Thestylis! Are thy poor wits all
 flown—

With love and duty flown away? Art thou too scornful grown?
 Dost mock my spirit's raging grief—its vengeance wouldst thou stay?
 Quick! Sprinkle o'er the burning brands, and as we sprinkle say,
 "Thus sprinkle we false Delphis' bones—thus may they burn away!
 Roll round, roll round, my magic wheel! Roll round and round
 amain!

And hither draw—oh, draw to me—my own love back again!"

O'er thee, O cruel Delphis, we burn this laurel bough,
 And as it crackles in the flames with fiercely lurid glow,
 Of rage and pain, which I have borne, thou too shalt have thy turn;
 Thy bones shall crackle, racked with pain, thy heart with rage shall
 burn.

Roll round, roll round, my magic wheel! Roll round and round
 amain!

And hither draw—oh, draw to me—my own love back again!

As this soft wax amidst the flames will quickly melt away,
 So may the traitor's false false love as quickly feel decay.
 Then, pitying Venus, thou'lt inspire the chasten'd youth once more,
 Drawn hither by the wheel of fate, to seek my cottage door!
 Roll round, roll round, my magic wheel! Roll round and round
 amain!

And hither draw—oh, draw to me—my own love back again!

¹ Tibullus and Propertius mention her; and she is, according to the Scholiast, the Agamede of Homer.

² The sorceress of old tied a wryneck or water wagtail to a wheel, which she turned, uttering an incantation, believing all the while that she was drawing the soul of the person wished for nearer to her. The wheel took the name of the bird (ἰϋγξ), and retained it long after the torture of the poor little victim itself was dispensed with.

³ For this and other ingredients of the sacrifice see parallel passage Virgil's *Eclogues*.

Now bring the bran, and sprinkle it above the sacred flame,
 And let us pray thee, Artemis,¹ whose mighty power can tame
 E'en adamantine Pluto, and change his stern decree,
 To tame the stony-hearted youth, and turn him back to me.
 But, hark ! the crouching city hounds the pale moon bay² in fear !
 Sound, Thestylis, on thy sounding brass a welcome loud and clear !
 All hail ! She's in the cross roads !³ Now the goddess, lo ! is here !
 Roll round, roll round, my magic wheel ! Roll round and round
 amain !
 And hither draw—oh, draw to me—my own love back again !

The calm sea-waves are sleeping ; sleep valley, plain, and hill ;
 The hushed winds sleep ; but my wrung heart will never more be still !⁴
 Watching fondly for him ever, weeping o'er his cruel scorn,
 Who robbed my maiden honour, and debased my life's young morn !
 Roll round, roll round, my magic wheel ! Roll round and round
 amain !
 And hither draw—oh, draw to me—my own love back again !

I'll pour out a libation, and three times I'll chaunt my prayer :
 " Most holy goddess, loved and feared, oh grant me that, whene'er
 The wily one on Delphis' heart her wretched arts shall try,
 Deep, deep oblivion of her charms shall o'er his senses lie.
 Like that which seized on Theseus, when he left on Dia's⁵ shore
 His bright-haired Ariadne, and forgot her evermore." [amain !
 Roll round, roll round, my magic wheel ! Roll round and round
 And hither draw—oh, draw to me—my own love back again !

In Arcady's deep valleys hippomanes⁶ is grown,
 To feed on which the mountain mares and colts rush madly down ;

¹ The Greeks called Diana by this name, and her chief festival by that of Artemisia, which lasted three days, and was kept throughout the chief cities of Greece and her colonies with great pomp and rejoicing in the spring of the year.

² Virgil's *Æneid*, vi. :

" ——— Visæque canes ululare per urbem
 Adventante Deâ." . . .

³ A surname of Diana, who presided where three roads met.

⁴ Virgil's *Æneid*, iv. See the eloquent description of the sleep of Nature on that stilly night when all could sleep but unfortunate Dido.

⁵ Ancient name for Naxos—now Naxia—the largest and most fertile of the Cyclades, famous for its worship of Bacchus and the production of one of the best wines of Greece.

⁶ Virgil makes mention of it in the course of some very fine passages (*Georg.* iii.) descriptive of the love-madness which takes possession of certain animals, and of the horse especially, at the beginning of summer.

And when they've fed on, for short space, the herb they love the best,
 More madly still they rush up hill, with furious love possess'd.
 Oh, thus may Delphis, 'neath my spells, bound from the wrestling
 throng,

And raging mad with love of me, like mad colt rush along! [amain!
 Roll round, roll round, my magic wheel! Roll round and round
 And hither draw—oh, draw to me—my own love back again!

Green and scaly lizards,¹ Delphis, a bitter gift for thee,
 In thy hell-broth of the morrow shall with care commingled be.
 Now take these drugs, my maiden, and smear them thickly o'er
 The doorposts of the youth I love, who thinks of me no more;
 And spit upon them thick and fast, until you hear his groans,
 Saying "Thus I spit on Delphis!—thus I smear the false one's bones!"
 Roll round, roll round, my magic wheel! Roll round and round
 amain!

And hither draw—oh, draw to me—my own love back again!

See, as I say, "Away! Away!" swift Thestylis is gone,
 And by these dying embers low I'm left to weep alone.
 Ah, whence my first, my maiden love, all hapless didst thou spring?
 To thy sad source, oh, whither shall remembrance take its wing?
 Was't not thy great procession, oh, Goddess all divine?
 Hear and help me, mighty Artemis! Yes! yes! the feast was thine!
 Oh, let me see, fond memory, that flower-crowned virgin train,
 In all its radiant innocence—let me see it once again!

'Twas early in the morning of the great spring holiday,
 When the pride of royal Syracuse came down our village way.
 The loveliest of her daughters those maidens were, I ween;
 And singing hymns of love they came, and dancing o'er the green.
 Next after them, in ordered line, as gentle lambkins tame,
 The queenly lioness in front, the circus beasts all came.
 Then beautiful Anaxo—ah, I knew the maiden well,
 And eke her sire, old Eubulus—threw o'er me love's first spell,
 From her basket of sweet flowers, crying, "Come, oh sweetest love,
 Simætha—come along with us to Dian's sacred grove!"
 Chaste Lady Moon, list and commune with my lorn heart, and say
 How fate accurst seduced me first from honour's sacred way!

¹ The most indispensable of all the animal ingredients thrown into the witch's cauldron of ancient or modern times. See description of the most terrible hell-broth ever brewed in the most striking of all the witch scenes in 'Macbeth,' that which takes place at the opening of the fourth act:

"Adder's fork and blindworm's sting,
 Lizard's leg and owlet's wing."

'Twas then my own dear Thracian nurse, now gone to her last rest,
 Fond Theucarilla, made me don my new white linen vest,
 With Clearista's robe and train. "Go, join the festal throng!"
 The old crone said; and I was led in youthful pride along.
 Chaste Lady Moon, list and commune with my lorn heart, and say
 What fate accurst seduced me first from honour's sacred way!

When we had wound our way along, just halfway through the wood,
 To where a farmer's dwelling—'twas our neighbour Lycon's—stood,
 'Twas there my eyes, with glad surprise, as they were walking slow,
 Saw Eudamippus and his friend, the cause of all my woe,
 My Delphis, loveliest of youths. Ah! 'twas first I saw him there,
 With his soft beard of the marigold and his golden love-locks fair;
 With his arms so sleek and shining with palæstic oil so fine;
 His neck so fair, his bosom bare—that bosom all divine!
 Love in his face; his form was grace; bright was his beaming brow—
 To me more bright than thine own pure light, sweet Moon, that lights
 me now!

Chaste Lady Moon, list and commune with my lorn heart, and say
 How fate accurst seduced me first from honour's sacred way!

I maddened and I saddened; oh! my heart grew sick and sore;
 And I felt through all my senses as I never felt before.
 A sleepy chill came o'er me, as if death's own chill had come;
 Fainting, falling, struggling homeward, late at night I reached my
 home,

Not knowing how I reached it. Then the chill that freezed me first
 To a ten-days' raging fever changed, wild dreams, and quenchless thirst.
 Chaste Lady Moon, list and commune with my lorn heart, and say
 What fate accurst seduced me first from honour's sacred way!

As hot as flame my skin became, like boxwood pale and dry,
 I'd fiend-like laugh, as my hair fell off; I could not weep nor cry.
 I looked a thing of skin and bone—a thing condemned to die!
 What house in all the village has not echoed to my moan?
 What charms and philtres have I sought from every witching crone?
 But no relief to my heart's grief from friend or sorceress came;
 Time rolled along; and hope burns strong, when youth lights up the
 flame.

And when youth's bloom came back again, I vowed, whatever pain
 It cost, that I would seek my love, and win him back again.
 Chaste Lady Moon, list and commune with my lorn heart, and say
 What fate accurst seduced me first from honour's sacred way!

Then I called my faithful maiden, and "O Thestylis!" I cried,
 "Since none can cure what I endure—the pangs of love and pride;

Thou e'en must be love's messenger—my madness cannot wait !
 The Myndian youth possesses me ! Go, go, and seek him straight.
 Thou'lt find him at the wrestling school hard by the city gate :
 Brave Timogetus keeps it ; his first pupil is my love,
 More beautiful than all the rest, as thou shalt truly prove,
 Whether thou seest him looking on or joining in the sport
 'Midst the thronged palæstra's plaudits, where the young athletes resort.
 Chaste Lady Moon, list and commune with my lorn heart, and say
 How fate accurst seduced me first from honour's sacred way !

“ And when thou see'st the youth alone, step up to him, and say,
 He'll find Simætha loves him well, whene'er he comes this way ;
 And bring him with you, sweetest girl—oh, bring him here, I pray !”
 Then I gave a kiss to Thestylis, who flew on love's fleet wing,
 And soon the sleek-skinned Delphis to my longing arms did bring.
 How shall I tell what me befell more strangely than before,
 When with strange wild joy the Myndian boy I saw approach my door ?
 Chaste Lady Moon, list and commune with my lorn heart, and say
 How fate accursed seduced me first from honour's sacred way !

My blood all o'er was freezed once more ; my checks turned white as
 snow ;

Adown my face the big cold drops in streams began to flow ;
 Like southern dews they fell so fast, I weak and weaker grew ;
 A tremor ran through all my limbs and all my senses through ;
 My gasping voice and faltering words I scarce myself could hear—
 Low whispering like the sleeping child who murmurs “ Mother dear !”
 The conscious blushes from my cheeks to my beating heart had fled ;
 And stiff, and like an eye-glazed doll, I lay, and lay for dead.
 Chaste Lady Moon, list and commune with my lorn heart, and say
 How fate accursed seduced me first from honour's sacred way !

Again, to life and consciousness as I came slowly round,
 His eyes so meek my eyes would seek, then bashful seek the ground.
 So bashfully he pressed my hand as on my couch I lay ;
 But when I pressed his hand in turn, he said, so bold and gay,
 “ O beautiful Simætha ! We both at length must own,
 Though great may be my love for thee, thy love first ran it down—
 Nay, fairly ran before it, with full as rapid pace
 As th' other day I left behind Philinus in the race.
 By Eros, God of Love himself ! my heart so yearned for thee
 That I had come to thee this night, with comrades two or three,
 Had I not got thy sweet command to come to thee alone.
 The pomegranates¹ of Bacchus before thee I'd have strown,

¹ Love-gifts—*bonbons à la Grecque*—mentioned in more than one of the Sicilian idyls.

To prove my love and loyalty ; the sacred wedding bough
 From great Alcides' poplar¹ I'd have twined around my brow ;
 And I'd have bound the leaves all round with purple ribbons rare,—
 The victor's colours in the games—the colours, love, I wear !
 With hymenæal songs of joy, torch dance, and comrades gay,
 Proclaiming thus for thee my love, all in the public way ;
 No pride could be so proud as mine, no joy surpass my joy,
 If thou hadst smiled propitiously upon the handsome boy,
 Whose beauty is a proverb in the mouths of all the fair ;
 But if thou hadst disdained my love, and driven me to despair,
 Our sharp and stalwart axes thy doorposts' strength had tried,
 And our torches to thy roof-tree we straightway had applied.

“ But now I swear, my gentle fair ! I owe deep gratitude
 To Venus first, and next to thee, that both, in pitying mood,
 Have snatched me more than half-consumed from love's fierce flames
 —I trow,
 More fierce than Lemnian Vulcan's flames in all their fiercest glow.
 Love's flames consume the guileless youth, the virgin yet unwed,
 The faithless husband, and the bride who leaves her husband's bed :
 Then let us say, ‘ Come, come what may, from blame and shame
 we're free
 Since sacred Love's all-conquering flames have conquered me and thee !
 Chaste Lady Moon, list and commune with my lorn heart, and say
 How fate accurst seduced me first from honour's sacred way ! ”

Alas ! my too confiding heart ! Alas my trembling hand !
 When hearts and hands together press, weak reason mayn't withstand
 Th' electric glow their pulses know—I felt that glow all o'er ;
 My hot tears gushed, my heart's blood rushed more hotly than before.
 He soothed me with his soft sweet words—the words I will not say ;
 But I'll not forget those magic words until my dying day !
 Then o'er my soul the love-trance stole ; I dreamt a dream divine !
 O Love, I was thy very slave ! O Venus, I was thine !
 Chaste Lady Moon, list and commune with my lorn heart, and say
 How fate accurst seduced me first from honour's sacred way !

But 'tis not meet for thee, chaste Moon, such words profane to hear ;
 What thy pure eye might not behold should not offend thine ear !
 For months we loved each other well ; for months in amorous play
 We played, and from each other's arms ne'er missed a single day ;
 Until—'tis now twelve long, long days—since Delphis fled away.

¹ Virgil's *Eclogues*, viii.—“ *Populus Alcidae gratissima* ; ” and, again, *Æneid*, viii.—“ *Populeis adsunt evincti tempora ramis*. ”

No fault had he to find with me, and he to me was true,
 Till but yesternorn I heard with scorn what man, false man, can do !
 Just as the coursers of the dawn were mounting up the sky,
 I saw the flute-girl's mother old my doorway passing by—
 Philista's and Melixó's dam (I've heard the neighbours say)—
 The sisters twain who at our feasts alternate dance and play.
 She asked me, had I heard the news, and said the news was true,
 That Myndian Delphis had given up his old love for a new ?
 She told me that she'd seen the youth pour out the unmixed wine,¹
 In bountiful libations to Love's young god divine.
 She saw him wreath the lady's door with flowery garlands fair,
 She saw him kneel at her doorposts, and leave his kisses² there.
 Abandoned thus—O wretched fate ! O Delphis, only say—
 What have I done to merit it ? Why dost thou from me stay,
 Thou, thou, who saw'st me daily—nay, sometimes thrice a day ?
 Thy Dorian oil-flask left with me, thou oft didst feign to lose, ,
 Then on love's track as oft ran back a league from Syracuse.
 But that dear race you'll ne'er retrace, love's race you ran before,
 Nor seek me with one fond excuse—oh, never, never more !

Am I alone ? And is he gone—gone, never to return ?
 Is't come to this—a rival's bliss must I for ever mourn ?
 Ah, no ! By all th' infernal powers ! by all the powers above !
 By the dread Fates, more dreadful still ! she shall not have my love !
 If rites and prayers to thee, chaste Moon, and Hecatè, should fail,
 The drugs the strange Assyrian gave shall prove of more avail.
 And should he never seek me more, my vengeance he shall know,
 When sent to seek the gates of hell in Hades down below !

Now, fare thee well, dear Lady Moon ! To thy calm ocean bed
 Thou'rt sinking low, and Night's pale stars, your lights, have all but fled !
 Away ! Away ! No longer stay ! My guilt and sorrow flee !
 And leave this cold and faithless world to fate's dark hour and me !

JOHN SHEEHAN.

¹ On ordinary social occasions, the Greek wine was, and is still, more agreeably drinkable mixed with a little water.

“Fill me, boy, as deep a draught
 As e'er was filled as e'er was quaff'd ;
 But let the water amply flow
 To cool the grape's intemperate glow !”

ANACREON—Moore's Translation.

² “At lacrumans exclusus amator limina saepe
 Floribus et sertis operit, posteisque superbos
 Unguit amaracino, et foribus miser oscula figit.”

LUCRETIVS. 2

Hans Schnaps' Spy-Glass.

By MM. ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN.

AT one time I knew, at Mayence, an honest apothecary, named Hans Schnaps. The door of his shop opened on to the Thiermack, and was surmounted by a sign-board, the panels of which were ornamented with the caduceus of Mercury and the serpentaria of Esculapius. As to Hans Schnaps himself, instead of attending to his business, he strolled about the streets, carrying a big spy-glass under his arm, and leaving his drugs to the care of a couple of youths in his employ.

He was a singular personage, with a long nose, grey eyes, and mocking lips. From the look of his wide-brimmed felt hat, his great coat of reddish drugget, and his beard trimmed into a point, you might have taken him for a Flemish painter.

I sometimes met him at the tavern of the *Pot de Tabac*, on the Zeil, where we played together a game of *youcker*, or chatted about the weather. Schnaps never felt called on to give me any information on the subject of his occupations, and I saw no necessity for enlightening him on the subject of mine ; it was, in fact, a matter of little or no importance to either.

One day, Burgomaster Zacharias said to me :

"Doctor Bénédict, you associate with a certain Hans Schnaps."

"Quite true, burgomaster ; we meet pretty frequently."

"That Schnaps is a madman."

"I've never noticed it."

"Nothing is more positive ; instead of attending to his business, he goes gadding about, with a spy-glass under his arm, stopping here and there ; in short, losing his time and his customers."

"That's his affair, burgomaster ; what would you have me do in it?"

"But he makes his wife unhappy," urged the burgomaster.

"What ! is he married?"

"Yes, to the daughter of a draper, a very worthy and well-to-do man."

"So much the better ; Schnaps will come in for some of his father-in-law's money."

"Yes ; but he'll soon see the end of it."

"With his spy-glass?"

"No ; but with his experiments. Imagine, doctor,—he's established himself in his cellar, and fabricates there the deuce only knows what. If, by chance, you throw a look through the grating, you find his spy-

glass levelled at you ; Schnaps eyes you with a roar of laughter—and when noon comes, his wife is always obliged to call out to him at least four times : ‘ Hans ! Hans ! the soup is ready ! ’ ”

“ Poor woman, she is very much to be pitied ! ”

The burgomaster suspected that I was making fun of him, but he pretended not to see it, and proposed that we should share a pot of beer together. I accepted his invitation, and we talked of other matters.

These odd revelations, however, did not the less take hold of my attention. What the deuce was Schnaps about in his cellar ? What was the meaning of the spy-glass levelled at the grating ? Was it a joke, or really some serious experiment ? All this kept running in my head, and, a few days later, I went to the shop for the express purpose of finding out what I could. It was about nine o'clock. Madame Schnaps, a dry and nervous little woman, with dull eyes, features generally insignificant and ill put together, and cap set awry upon her head—one of those beings who, without speaking a word, contrive to suggest the idea that they are victims—Madame Schnaps received me behind the counter.

“ Dear madame,” I said to her, bowing graciously, with lifted hat, “ Dear madame, where can I find your husband, Monsieur Schnaps ? ”

“ In the cellar,” she answered, with a pointed smile.

“ So early ! ”

The excellent creature appeared charmed by my manner, and raising her eyes directed me to a door on the left.

I hastened along the passage, and succeeded, after a good deal of stumbling on the dark stairs, in reaching the stone-paved floor of the laboratory.

It was really a cellar, but high, wide, spacious, and perfectly dry ; filled with gigantic telescopes, mirrors of all kinds—flat, spherical, parabolical—prisms, crystals, and burning-glasses, mounted on tripod stands ; in short, the whole apparatus of an optician.

Hans Schnaps turned in surprise on hearing me descending.

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! ” he cried, “ it’s you, Dr. Bénédict ! Glad to see you.”

He came towards me with open arms. But, stretching forth my hand with a tragic gesture—

“ Halt ! halt ! ” I cried ; “ stop a moment, before we indulge in familiarities ! I come on behalf of the burgomaster to feel your pulse ! ”

He gravely held out his arm to me ; I placed my thumb on the artery, and, speaking in a thoughtful tone and with pouted lip, I said :

“ Aha ! you are not so ill as they say.”

“ Ill ! ” he cried.

“ No ; you are not yet wholly out of your wits.”

These words sent him off into such fits of laughter that Madame Schnaps leaned over the stairs, and peered down into the cellar with wondering eyes.

"Sophia! Sophia!" cried the apothecary, "ha! ha! ha! Do you know what they say of me? Ha! ha! ha! They say I am out of my wits!"

His wife made a grimace, and hurried away without answering.

Becoming a little more calm, Hans Schnaps said to me:

"Take a seat, Dr. Bénédict, and tell me what has procured me the honour of this visit?"

He placed an arm-chair for me, and seated himself on the box of a daguerreotype apparatus, his long grasshopper legs sprawled wide apart, his elbows on his knees, and his pointed beard drawn out between his bony fingers.

His was truly a strange physiognomy, seen by the dim light admitted by the cellar-grating,—and the vague gleams that faded into shadow amid the thousand optical instruments added to the singularity of the scene.

I simply related to him the conversation I had had with the burgomaster, and Schnaps, far from becoming angry, burst into new peals of laughter.

"That animal of a burgomaster," he cried, "for whom I have just invented a new kind of syringe?—a superb discovery, doctor! And—ha! ha! Observe that spy-glass; it's the famous Schnaps' syringe, unique of its kind! With this wonderful instrument I am able to accomplish what has never before been possible—to syringe the brains of idiots, imbeciles, *crétins*, and burgomasters generally! I pour into the body of the pump a decoction of Voltaire, Shakespeare, or Father Malebranche; I delicately introduce into your eye the small end of the instrument—I press, and, crack!—you are filled with good sense, poetry, or metaphysics!"

"Aha! my dear friend," I said, "an excellent joke."

"Joke!—not the least in the world. You are much too sensible, Doctor Bénédict, not to know that our opinions depend upon our point of view: a miserable beggar, without fire or shelter, covered with rags, and with only a dunghill to lie upon, sees things in a light very different from that in which a nabob looks on them;—social order to him appears detestable, laws absurd."

"Doubtless, but"—

"But," interrupted Schnaps, "seat the fellow at a splendid table, in a beautiful house, surround him with odoriferous flowers and pretty women in magnificent dresses, feed him on the daintiest dishes, let him drink Johannisberg, and place behind his chair a dozen lacqueys, who call him monseigneur, highness, most eminent, &c.; he'll find that all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds; social order

will appear to him magnificent, and he will proclaim our laws masterpieces of human wisdom."

"Agreed, my dear Schnaps, agreed; what you now say is the history of humanity; we all look at things through the great or small end of the spy-glass, as it may happen. But what the deuce are you driving at?"

"Ah!" cried the apothecary, "it's very simple. From the moment that all depends on our point of view, the question of happiness is reduced to always finding the point of view that is the most agreeable—and that is precisely the merit of my discovery. Judge for yourself."

He handed me his spy-glass; I applied it to my eye, and could not refrain from uttering a cry of admiration. I saw myself President of the Scientific Society of Berlin, plump, ruddy, and hearty, decorated with the Orders of Merit, of the Black Eagle, of the Brown Eagle, of the Red Eagle, of the Legion of Honour, of the Garter, and others besides. I held the bell, and called people to order. Through the windows of the amphitheatre I saw my two-horse *calèche* and my footman bedizened with lace. Further off, I saw my mistress, a *première danseuse*, captivated by my charms, walking under the lindens, a parasol in her hand—and I said to myself, "Bénédum! Bénédum! Fortunate being! sublime genius! great man!"

A burst of ironical laughter drew me from this profound contemplation. I lowered the spy-glass and found myself in the cellar, in front of the apothecary, who was watching me, his little malicious eyes wrinkled to his ears.

"Well, well," he said, "what do you think of that?"

"Oh, my dear Schnaps," I exclaimed, "let me have it!"

"A good joke!" he cried; "you forget that it cost me ten years labour to make it. With this spy-glass the universe belongs to me, after a manner; I can see my wife, young, pretty, prepossessing; I am always gay, laughing, and contented. This spy-glass lifts me above the most powerful monarchs of the world; renders me richer than Croesus, more omnipotent than Xerxes; I would not lose it for the world! That is not all: with this spy-glass I can give myself injected doses of good sense, poetry, or metaphysics, according to the requirements of my temperament."

"But, in the name of heaven, Schnaps," I replied, transported with enthusiasm, "how did you make this sublime discovery?"

"It is not so marvellous as you believe," he said, laughing; "it is nothing more nor less than a kaleidoscope, but a kaleidoscope of a new kind: instead of allowing flowers and bits of glass to fall at hazard, it draws them together in a natural order. In other terms, it is a combination of the telescope and the daguerreotype, two instruments which nature herself has united in our hands."

At this moment he took out of his pocket a small snuff-box, and slowly inhaled a pinch, as if to collect himself, and then continued :

“For three years I tried to fix the solar spectrum on a copper-plate. To this end I employed chloride of silver, bitumen of Judea plunged in oil of lavender and petroleum, iodide of silver, bromide of lime, solid and fluid ; in short, all imaginable chemical combinations, without obtaining any decisive result. One evening, under the influence of a more sensitive composition, red, orange, and violet light appeared to fix itself ; the plate took, vaguely, the tints of the iris. I was forming the best opinion of it, when my dear spouse, according to her immemorial custom, cried out : ‘ Hans ! the soup is getting cold ! Hans ! the soup is getting cold ! Hans ! Hans ! Hans ! Hans ! the soup is getting cold ! The soup is getting cold ! ’ These cries rasped my nerves. Whether I would or not, I was obliged to interrupt my experiment. I placed the copper-plate on the jut of the wall you see over there, and which served me to stand a candle on ; that done, I went upstairs and quietly seated myself at table.”

“And what did you say to your wife ?”

“Nothing.”

“In your place, I should have wrung her neck.”

The apothecary smiled slyly.

“That same night,” he replied, “after supper, I went down again into the laboratory. Fatigue and weariness of mind forbade my continuing my labour ; I sat down in that arm-chair and fell asleep. On awaking, at one o’clock in the morning, I saw that the candle had gone out ; but the rays of a star broke through the grating, and reflected themselves on the metallic plate at the far end of the cellar. While my attention was fixed on this luminous spot, I was thinking of my wife ; I felt impelled to correct her ; a thousand little home-discomforts passed through my head ; but at length, tired of these reflections, I fell off to sleep again. The next day all was forgotten till, happening to cast my eyes on the plate, I saw there—what ?—my dream of the past night imprinted on it with striking truthfulness : my wife, the dining-room, the clock on the chimney, the windows at the back, the little yard beyond—my household interior to the smallest details. Only fancy played in the scene to a certain extent : I was about to administer correction to Madame Schnaps !

“Imagine my enthusiasm. I speedily conceived my spy-glass. I comprehended that the brain of man is like the eye of the fly, an optical instrument with a thousand facets ; that whatever is reflected in it may come from it by refraction, and imprint itself upon a chemical substance, the secret of which I had discovered.

“Thus, dear Doctor, all your passions, all your desires, all your thoughts, form themselves in this spy-glass. You improvise better by

a look than by speech, you materialise instantaneously the intellectual world moving within your mind."

This discovery appeared to me miraculous.

"Master Schnaps—extraordinary man!" I cried, "suffer me to embrace you. Greater than the pyramid of Cheops, your memory will descend through the coming ages, and shine in the future like a star of the first magnitude. But I beg of you to enlighten me on one point. How can you inject doses of philosophy, or of any other science?"

"In this manner," replied Schnaps, highly flattered by my compliments: "but, first, allow me to place before you some general considerations of the highest interest. You may have remarked, Dr. Bénédum, that great philosophers, great mathematicians, great poets, and generally all great *ideologists*, end miserably. Scoffed at during their lives, dishonoured, despised, and sometimes even hunted like wild beasts, they become, after their death, the prey of a certain class of individuals known under the name of *practical men*. A great deal of beautiful sentiment has been written, during the last three thousand years, against this usage of genius by mediocrity; but that does not prevent things going on, at the present time, exactly as they went on in the days of Homer, Pythagoras, Socrates, and many other celebrated ideologists: 'they persecute, they kill them,' safe to make for themselves reputations, and to coin money out of their discoveries! All this is passably melancholy and distressing, I admit, Doctor; but at bottom nothing is more simple, and I will even say more natural. For an idea to succeed in this world, it must have the support of the masses. Now the masses, who don't know how to raise themselves to the light of the pure ideal, admirably understand the ideal materialised, that is to say, *fact*. This is the sole source of the pretended power of practical men over ideologues. Those fellows are rich, powerful; they govern the world, statues are erected to them. Why?—because they set it down to imbecility that any poor devil of a great man should ever die of hunger in a garret. Is that true, yes or no?"

"It's positive, Master Schnaps."

"Well," continued the apothecary, with an ironical smile, "my spy-glass will suppress the practical men and restore to the ideologues the superiority which is their due; it will materialise ideas, and put them in direct communication with the masses! Let us suppose, for example, that I wish to take a lavement of metaphysics; I apply my eye to the lens. You read Kant to me, and in the proportion and to the extent to which I hear you, and his reasoning enters my head, will it pass forth from my eyes, and print itself upon the prepared plate; it will materialise itself, take bodily form; I see it, it is real, positive; I can have no doubt of its existence, since it is recognised by my senses; and this result is obtained by my lavement."

While Schnaps was explaining to me this great mystery, a furious desire to possess the spy-glass seized on me.

"My dear friend," I said to him, "I hope you will make several of these spy-glasses. Such a discovery belongs to entire humanity."

"To humanity!" he cried; "I should like to know what humanity has done for me! It has treated me as a madman, it has compelled me to live with an insupportable wife, it would have left me to die of starvation, like so many other inventors, if I had not had the resource of selling it drugs."

"But you will obtain public consideration—universal esteem and admiration."

"What do I care for the admiration of a heap of idiots?" cried the apothecary. "Take away from them the discoveries of Guttenburg, Galileo, Newton, and Volta, and there would be nothing left but a troop of asses on their knees before a sabre. The admiration of such people! No, no! Let humanity make spy-glasses for itself, I shall keep mine and use it for my own satisfaction."

I was indignant at such selfishness.

"Master Schnaps," I replied, repressing my anger, "permit me to tell you that your reasoning is absurd. You make sublime spy-glasses—very good; but others cultivate the land, sow, reap, grind the grain for us, and bring bread to our houses; others make medicines, others clothes and shoes others procure for us wine, beer, tobacco, none of which things you disdain. We are all bound one to the other, Master Schnaps; therefore"—

While I was developing this thesis, the apothecary looked at me through his spy-glass.

"Aha!" he cried, interrupting me, "I see what you want. You care very little for humanity. What you want is my spy-glass; but you shan't have it. Ha! ha! ha!"

On this he shut it up like a spring-hat, placed it in a box, which he carefully locked, then, turning to me with a bantering air, said:

"You'll not put that up to your nose any more. That will be a lesson to you, and teach you, for the future, not to play the hypocrite and preach the Gospel for your own profit. You're a sly dog, Dr. Bénédum—a philanthropist! I don't like people of that kind. Oblige me by departing by the way you came."

The blood mounted to my face. I felt a terribly strong desire to chastise Hans Schnaps, who watched me with a cunning expression in his eyes, and insolently pointed to the door; but I all at once recollected that the two boys in the shop above were a pair of thick-set fellows, and prudently retired.

Since then I removed from Mayence to come and live in Nuremberg, and for nearly two years have not seen Hans Schnaps. I think he still goes about the streets in his rusty coat, with his spy-glass under his

arm ; at least, so Burgomaster Zacharias recently told me in a letter, and I have no doubt of the fact.

What a pity that such a magnificent secret should be in the hands of such a fool !

A thing strange and worthy of remark is, that men of good sense have never invented anything ; it is the fools who, up to the present time, have made all the great discoveries.

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The Mysterious Sketch.

CHAPTER I.

OPPOSITE to the Chapel of St. Sebalt's, at Nuremberg, at the corner of the street of the Trebans, stands a little inn, narrow and high, with gabled front, dusty panes, and the roof crowned with a plaster Virgin. It was there that I passed the saddest days of my life. I had gone to Nuremberg to study the old German masters; but, for want of ready money, I was obliged to do portraits . . . And what portraits! Fat gossips, with their cat on their knees; aldermen, in wigs; burgomasters, in three-cornered hats—the whole coloured in ochre and vermilion. From portraits I came down to pencil sketches, and from sketches to silhouettes. There is nothing so wretched as having the landlord of an hotel constantly after one, with pinched lips, shrill voice, and impudent manner, coming every day and saying: "Come now! do you intend to pay me soon, sir? Do you know how much your bill is? No, that is nothing to you . . . You eat, drink, and sleep quietly . . . The Lord giveth food to the little birds. This gentleman's bill amounts to two hundred florins ten kreutzers . . . it is hardly worth speaking of." Those who have not heard this song sung can have no idea what it is: love of art, imagination, sacred enthusiasm for the beautiful, are all dried up before the breath of such a scoundrel. . . . One becomes awkward, timid; all one's energy is lost, as well as the feeling of one's personal dignity, and one salutes with great respect the burgomaster Schnugans, when he passes in the distance!

One night, not having a penny, as usual, and being threatened with prison by this worthy Master Rap, I resolved to cheat him by cutting my throat. With this agreeable thought, seated on my pallet-bed opposite the window, I gave myself up to a thousand philosophical reflections, which were more or less pleasant.

"What is man?" said I to myself. "An omnivorous animal; his jaws, which are provided with fangs, incisors, and molar teeth, are proof sufficient thereof. The fangs are made for tearing meat, the incisors for eating fruit, and the molar teeth for masticating, grinding, and triturating animal and vegetable substances which are agreeable to the taste and smell. But when there is nothing to masticate, this thing is a regular absurdity in nature, a superfluity, a fifth wheel to a carriage."

Such were my reflections! I did not dare to open my razor, for

fear that the invincible force of my logic should inspire me with the courage to put an end to myself. After having well argued in this manner, I blew out my candle and left the result for the next day.

This abominable Rap had completely brutalised me. I saw nothing as regards art but silhouettes, and my only wish was to have money to rid me of his odious presence. But that night a singular resolution was made in my mind. I waked about one o'clock ; I relighted my lamp, and, wrapping myself in my old gray coat, I threw on to paper a rapid sketch in the Dutch style ; . . . something strange, wild, which had no connection with my habitual conceptions.

Imagine a dark yard, inclosed in high tottering walls. These walls are furnished with hooks at seven or eight feet from the ground. One guesses at the first glance that it is a slaughterhouse. On the left there is a wooden trelliswork ; you perceive through it a quartered ox, hung to the ceiling by enormous pulleys. Large pools of blood flowed over the flags into a trench, which was full of shapeless remains. The light comes from the top, from between the chimneys, whose weathercocks are cut out against a corner of the sky as large as one's hand ; and the roofs of the neighbouring houses cast dark shadows on the lower storeys. In the farther end of this place there is a shed ; . . . under the shed a pile ; on the pile some ladders, some heaps of straw and of rope, a coop for chickens, and an old worn-out rabbit-hutch.

How did it come that I imagined all these whimsical details ? . . . I do not know. I had no analogous recollection ; and yet each pencil-stroke seemed the result of observation. Nothing was wanting.

But on the right a corner of the sketch remained blank. . . . I did not know how to fill it in. . . . There something was moving. . . . Suddenly I saw a foot—a foot which was reversed and not on the ground. In spite of this improbable position, I followed the inspiration without accounting for my own thought. The foot ended in a leg. . . . On the leg, which was stretched out with effort, floated the skirt of a gown. . . . In short, an old woman, wan, emaciated, dishevelled, appeared at last, lying on the edge of a well, and fighting with a fist which was pressing her throat. . . . It was a scene of murder which I was drawing. The pencil fell from my hand.

This woman, whose attitude was quite startling, with her loins doubled on the brink of the well, her face contracted with terror, her two hands grasping the arm of the murderer, frightened me. . . . I did not dare to look at her. But him, the man, the owner of the arm, I did not see. . . . It was impossible for me to finish it.

"I am tired," thought I, while my forehead was bathed in perspiration ; "there is only this figure to be done ; I will finish it to-morrow. It will be quite easy."

And I went to bed again, quite terrified at my vision. Five minutes later I was sound asleep.

The following day I was up at dawn. I had just dressed myself, and was preparing to go on with my interrupted work, when two little taps sounded on the door.

"Come in."

The door opened. A man, already old, tall, thin, dressed in black, appeared on the threshold. The features of this man—his eyes, which were close together, his great eagle nose, and wide bony forehead—were somewhat severe. He bowed gravely.

"Mr. Christian Venius, the painter?" said he.

"I am he, monsieur."

He bowed again, and added—

"Baron Friedrich von Spreckdal."

The appearance in my poor house of the rich amateur Spreckdal, judge of the criminal court, impressed me deeply. I could not help throwing a hasty glance at my old worm-eaten furniture, at my damp bed-hangings, and dusty floor. I felt humiliated by such dilapidation. . . . But Von Spreckdal seemed to pay no attention to these details, and, seating himself before my little table, began:

"Master Venius, I come. . . ."

But at that instant his eyes were caught by the uncompleted sketch, and he did not finish his sentence. I had seated myself on the edge of my bed, and the sudden attention accorded by such a person to one of my productions made my heart beat with undefinable fear.

After a minute bow, Spreckdal raised his head.

"Are you the author of this sketch?" said he, looking at me attentively.

"Yes, sir."

"What is its price?"

"I do not sell my sketches . . . it is the idea for a painting."

"Ah!" said he, raising the paper with the point of his yellow fingers.

He drew a glass from his waistcoat-pocket, and began to study the sketch in silence.

The sun shone obliquely into the attic. Von Spreckdal did not utter a word; his great hooked nose, his wide eyebrows, were contracted, and his chin, protruding in a point, formed a hundred little wrinkles in his long thin cheeks. The silence was so profound that I distinctly heard the plaintive buzzing of a fly which was caught in a spider's web.

"And the dimensions of this painting, Master Venius?" said he at last, without looking at me.

"Three feet by four."

"The price?"

"Fifty ducats."

Von Spreckdal replaced the drawing on the table, and took from his pocket a long green silk purse. He drew off the rings.

"Fifty ducats," said he; "here they are."

I was dazzled.

The Baron had risen; he bowed, and I heard his great ivory-headed cane sounding on each step to the foot of the staircase. Then, recovering from my stupor, I remembered all of a sudden that I had not thanked him, and I flew down the five storeys like lightning; but when I arrived on the threshold it was in vain that I looked to right and left—the street was deserted.

"Dear me, that's funny," said I; and went upstairs again, quite out of breath.

CHAPTER II.

THE surprising manner in which Von Spreckdal had just appeared threw me quite into ecstasy. "Yesterday," said I, as I contemplated the heap of ducats which glittered in the sun—"yesterday I formed the culpable design of cutting my throat for a few miserable florins, and now, to-day, a fortune falls from the clouds. . . . Decidedly I did well not to open my razor, and if ever the temptation to put an end to myself assails me again, I shall take care to put it off till—the next day."

After these judicious reflections, I seated myself to finish the sketch; four strokes of my pencil and it would be done. But here an incomprehensible difficulty awaited me. It was impossible for me to make those four strokes. I had lost the thread of my inspiration; the mysterious individual would not detach himself from the limbers of my brain. It was in vain that I invoked him, that I sketched outlines and tried again and again; he was no more in accordance with the whole than a figure of Raphael's would be in one of 'Teniers' smoking scenes. The drops stood on my brow.

At the finest moment, Rap opened the door without knocking, according to his laudable custom: his eyes fell on my heap of ducats, and with a squeaking voice he cried:

"Ah! I have caught you. Will you say again, Mr. Painter, that you have no money?"

And his crooked fingers advanced with that nervous trembling which the sight of gold always produces with misers.

I remained stupefied a few seconds. Then the recollection of all the insults which this creature had heaped on me, his avaricious looks, his impudent smile, exasperated me. With a single bound I seized

him, and pushing him with both hands out of the room, I flattened his nose with the door.

This was done with the 'cric-crac' and the rapidity of a Jack-in-the-Box.

But outside, the old usurer uttered piercing cries:

"My money, robber—my money!"

The lodgers came out of their rooms asking:

"What is the matter? What has happened?"

I opened the door suddenly, and with a blow of my foot in the spine of Master Rap, sent him down more than five steps.

"That is what is happening," said I, beside myself.

Then I shut the door and fastened it, while shouts of laughter saluted Master Rap in his flight.

I was pleased with myself; I rubbed my hands. This adventure had restored my animation. I recommenced work, and was going to finish the sketch, when an unusual noise struck my ear.

It was the butt-end of rifles being put down on the pavement of the street. I looked out of my window and saw three gendarmes, with their rifles lowered, drawn up at the door of the house.

"Can that wretch Rap have broken anything?" said I, in a fright.

And such is the strange contradiction in the human mind, that I, who the evening before had wished to cut my throat, now shuddered to the marrow of my bones at the thought that they could hang me if Rap was dead.

The staircase was filling with confused sounds . . . It was a rising tide of hollow steps, the clank of arms and rapid words. Suddenly some one tried to open my door. It was fastened.

Then there was quite a clamour.

"Open, in the name of the Law!"

I rose trembling, with shaking legs.

"Open!" repeated the same voice.

The idea of saving myself over the roofs occurred to me; but hardly had I put my head through the little window, than I drew back seized with vertigo. I had seen as in a lightning flash all the windows below, with their gleaming panes, their flower-pots, their bird-cages, their gratings; and lower down the balcony; lower down the street lamp; lower down the sign of the *Tonnelet Rouge*, covered with crampons; then, at last, the three glittering bayonets, which only awaited my fall to impale me. On the roof of the house opposite a great red cat on guard behind one of the chimneys was watching a troop of sparrows who were chirping and quarrelling in the gutter. It is impossible to imagine to what clearness, to what power and rapidity of perception, the life of a man can attain when stimulated by fear.

At the third summons—"Open the door, or we will break it open!"

—I saw that flight was impossible, and approaching the door with trembling steps, I drew back the bolt.

Two fists immediately seized my collar, and a little thickset man, smelling of wine, said :

“I arrest you.”

He wore a bottle-green overcoat, buttoned up to the chin, and a hat shaped like the pipe of a stove ; he had great brown whiskers, . . . rings on all his fingers, and was called Passauf. It was the head of the police.

Five bulldog heads, with little flat caps, were observing me from without.

“What do you want?” asked I of Passauf.

“Come down,” exclaimed he, roughly, making a sign to one of the men to seize me.

This latter dragged me away more dead than alive, while the others turned my room upside down.

I went down, supported under the arms like a man in the third stage of consumption ; my hair falling over my face, and stumbling at each step.

I was thrown into a fly, between two fellows, who had the charity to let me see the end of two staves fastened with a strap to the wrist ; then the carriage set off. I heard the steps of all the *gamins* of the town running after us.

“What have I done?” I asked of one of my guards.

He looked at his companion with a strange smile, saying : “Hans, he wants to know what he has done.”

This smile froze my blood.

Soon a profound shadow enveloped the carriage—the horses’ feet sounded under an arch. We were entering the *Raspelhaus*, of which one might well say :

“Dans cet antre
Je vois bien comme l’on entre,
Et ne voit point comme on en sort.”

All is not *couleur de rose* in this world : from the claws of Rap I fell into a dungeon, from which most poor devils have small chance of escaping. Great dark yard ; rows of windows, as in a hospital ; not a tuft of grass, not a leaf of ivy, not even a weathercock in perspective : that was my new lodging. It was enough to make one tear out one’s hair by handfuls.

The police agents, accompanied by the jailer, incarcerated me temporarily in a lock-up.

The jailer, as far as I can remember, was called Kaspar Schlüssel ; with his gray woollen cap, his short pipe between his teeth, and his bunch of keys at his waist, he appeared to me like the god of the Caribbees, who is an owl. He had great round yellowish eyes, which

looked as if they saw by night, a pointed nose, and a neck which was lost in his shoulders.

Schlüssel shut me up as quietly as one puts away clothes in a cupboard, thinking of other things. As for me, I remained more than ten minutes in the same place, with my hands closed behind my back, and my head hanging down. At the end of this time I made the following reflection :

"Rap, when he fell, called out : 'They are murdering me !' but he did not say who. I shall say that it was my neighbour, the old man who sells spectacles ; he will be hanged in my place."

This idea comforted me, and I heaved a deep sigh. Then I looked at my prison. It had just been newly whitewashed, and the walls were quite bare, except in one corner, where my predecessor had sketched a gibbet. The light came from a little window, nine or ten feet from the ground ; the furniture consisted of a heap of straw and a bucket.

I seated myself on the straw, with my hands round my knees, in inconceivable despondency. I hardly saw clearly ; and of a sudden, remembering that Rap might have denounced me before his death, I tingled in every joint, and got up coughing, as if the hempen cravat were already pressing my throat. Almost at the same moment I heard Schlüssel crossing the passage ; he opened the door and told me to follow him. He was still assisted by the two men with staves, and I stepped out resolutely after him. We passed through long galleries, lighted at certain distances by windows inside. I saw behind some bars the famous Tic-Tack, who was to be executed the following day. He was wearing a strait-waistcoat, and was singing in a loud voice, "I am the king of the mountains !" Seeing me, he cried : "Hullo, comrade, I will keep a place for you on my right."

The two police agents and the god of the Caribbees looked at each other with a smile, while a cold shiver crept all down my back.

CHAPTER III.

SCHLÜSSEL pushed me into a high room, which was very dark, and furnished with seats in a semicircle. The appearance of this deserted hall, with its two high-barred windows, its Christ of dark old oak, a figure with its arms extended and head sadly falling on its shoulders, inspired me with a religious fear over and above that caused by my actual position.

All my ideas of false accusation disappeared, and my lips moved as I murmured a prayer. For a long time I had never prayed, but misfortune always recalls us to thoughts of submission. Man is such a poor creature !

In front of me, on a high seat, were two persons whose position with their backs to the light left their figures in shadow. Nevertheless I recognised Von Spreckdal by his aquiline profile, which was illumined obliquely by a ray from the window. The other was fat; he had full red cheeks and wore a judge's robe, as did also Von Spreckdal.

Below was seated Conrad, the clerk; he was writing at a low table, tickling his ear with the end of his pen. On my arrival he stopped, in order to look at me with considerable curiosity. They made me sit down, and Von Spreckdal, raising his voice, said: "Christian Venius, where did you get this drawing?" He showed me the nocturnal sketch, which was then in his possession. They handed it to me. After having examined it, I answered:

"I did it."

There was rather a long silence, and Conrad wrote down my answer. I listened to his pen running over the paper, and I thought: "What is the meaning of the question they have just asked me? It has nothing to do with the kick I gave Rap."

"You did this drawing," continued Von Spreckdal; "what is the subject of it?"

"It is a fancy subject."

"You have not copied all these details?"

"No, my lord, they are all imaginary."

"Prisoner," said the judge, severely, "I give you time for reflection; do not lie!"

I reddened, and exclaimed, with some excitement: "I have told the truth."

"Put this down," said Von Spreckdal to the clerk.

The pen again squeaked on the paper.

"And this woman," pursued the judge, "this woman who is being murdered on the edge of the pit, was she also an imaginary figure?"

"Certainly."

"You have never seen her?"

"Never."

Von Spreckdal rose, as if indignant; then, reseating himself, he consulted in a low voice with his fellow-judge. These two black profiles standing out against the light background of the window, and the three men standing behind me, the silence of the hall, everything made me shudder.

"What do they want with me? What have I done?" I murmured.

Suddenly Von Spreckdal said to my jailers: "Take back the prisoner to the carriage; we are going to start for the Metzger Strasse." Then turning to me, he exclaimed: "Christian Venius, you have started on a sad course; recollect yourself, and remember that if human justice is inflexible, there still remains for you God's mercy. You may deserve it if you confess your crime!"

These words struck me as if with the blow of a hammer. I stretched out my arms, screaming, "Oh, what a frightful dream!" and fainted.

When I came to myself the carriage was moving slowly along in the street; another one was in front. The two constables were still there. On the road one of them offered his companion a pinch of snuff; mechanically I put out my finger towards his snuff-box; he drew back quickly. The blush of shame covered my face, and I turned away my head to hide my emotion.

"If you look out," said the man with the snuff-box, "we shall be obliged to put you in handcuffs."

"May the devil strangle you, infernal scoundrel!" thought I. The carriage stopped; one of them got out whilst the other held me back by the collar; then, seeing his comrade ready to receive me, he pushed me out rudely. These numerous precautions for the safety of my person did not look well for me; but I was far from foreseeing the gravity of the accusation which was weighing on me, when a frightful circumstance at last opened my eyes and threw me into despair. I had just been pushed into a low passage, with broken unequal pavement; there flowed along the wall a yellowish oozing, from which a foetid smell exhaled. I was walking in darkness, the two men behind me. Farther on there was a dim light from an inside yard.

The farther I advanced, the more did my terror increase. It was not a natural feeling; it was a fearful anxiety, unnatural as a nightmare. At each step I instinctively drew back.

"Come now!" exclaimed one of the constables, pressing his hand on my shoulder. "Get on!"

But what was my terror when, at the end of the passage, I saw the yard which I had sketched the previous night, with its walls garnished with hooks, its collection of old iron, its hen-coop, and its rabbit-hutch! Not a window, small or large, not a cracked pane, not a detail had been omitted. I was thunderstruck by this strange revelation.

Near to the wall were the two judges, Von Spreckdal and Richter. At their feet lay the old woman on her back, her long gray hair dishevelled, her face blue, her eyes unnaturally open, and her tongue between her teeth.

It was a horrible sight!

"Now," said Von Spreckdal, solemnly, "what have you to say?"

I did not reply.

"Do you confess to having thrown this woman, Theresa Becha, into this pit, having first strangled her in order to rob her of her money?"

"No," I cried. "No! I do not know this woman; I have never seen her. May you be my witness!"

"That is enough," replied he, drily; and without adding a word, he and his companion went out quickly.

The policemen then thought it their duty to put handcuffs on me, and I was taken back to the Rasperhaus in a state of stupor. I hardly knew what to think; even my conscience was confused. I asked myself whether I had not murdered the old woman. In the eyes of my jailers I was already condemned.

I will not detail to you all that I felt that night in the Rasperhaus, when, seated on my heap of straw, with the little window in front of me, and the gibbet in perspective, I heard the watchman crying in the silence: "Sleep, inhabitants of Nuremberg! The Lord watches! One o'clock! two o'clock! three o'clock have struck!"

Every one can form an idea of such a night. It is all very well to say that it is better to be hung innocent than guilty. For the soul it may be so, but as far as the body is concerned it makes no difference; on the contrary, it curses its fate, and seeks to escape, knowing that the cord will put an end to its part. Added to that, it regrets not to have taken enough enjoyment out of life, and to have listened to the soul which preached abstinence. "Ah! if I had but known!" it exclaims, "I should not have been led by your big words, your grand phrases, and magnificent sentences! I should not have been allured by your fine promises. I should have had some delightful moments which will never return. It is all over! You said to me, 'Curb your passions!' Well, I did curb them; and much better I am for having done so. I am going to be hanged, and in time you will be called sublime spirit, stoical soul, martyr to the mistakes of justice. I shall no longer be thought of!" Such were the sad reflections of my poor body.

The day came, at first pale, undecided; it sent its feeble rays through the round window, through the iron bars, then it shone on the inside wall. Without, the street was filling; being Friday, it was market-day. I heard the carts loaded with vegetables and the good peasants of the Schwarz-voula with their baskets going by. Some chickens in coops cackled as they went past, and the sellers of butter chatted to each other. The market opposite was being opened. They were arranging the benches.

At last it was quite day; and the great murmur of the growing crowd of housewives who were assembling with their baskets under their arms, going, coming, discussing, and bargaining, showed me that it was eight o'clock in the morning. With the daylight I began somewhat to regain my confidence. Some of my black ideas disappeared, and I felt a great desire to see what was going on outside.

Some of my predecessors had pulled themselves up to the window; they had made some holes in the wall by which to ascend more easily. I climbed up in my turn, and when seated in the oval

recess with my back bent, and my head pressed forward, I could see the crowd, the life, the movement; tears flowed rapidly down my cheeks. I no longer thought of suicide; I felt an extraordinary desire to live and to breathe. "Ah," said I to myself, "it is delightful to live! What do I care if they make me drag a barrow or fasten a bullet to my leg, as long as they let me live!"

The old market, with the roof shaped like an extinguisher supported on heavy pillars, was a splendid sight. Old women seated in front of their baskets of vegetables or eggs, or of their coops full of poultry; behind them the Jewish dealers in old clothes, with their dark faces; the butchers with their bare arms cutting up the meat in their stalls; the country people with the large felt hats planted on the back of the head, calm and grave, their hands behind their backs leaning on their holly-sticks, and quietly smoking their pipes. Then the thronging, the noise of the crowd, those shrill, excited, serious, high or sharp words, those expressive gestures, those unexpected attitudes which betray from afar the progress of the discussion, and paint so well the character of the individual; in short, everything captivated me, and in spite of my melancholy position, I felt happy to think that I still belonged to this world.

Now, while I was thus looking out, a man went by; he was a butcher, who with bent back was carrying an enormous quarter of beef on his shoulders; his arms were bare, his elbows stuck out, and his head was bent down; his floating hair, like that of Salvator's 'Sicambre,' concealed his face from me, but at the first glance I started . . . "It is he!" said I to myself, and all my blood flowed back to my heart. I got down into the dungeon, quivering to the tips of my fingers, feeling my cheeks growing pale, and stammering with a stifled voice:

"It is he! He is there . . . there, and I am to die to expiate his crime . . . Oh, God! what shall I do?—what shall I do?"

A sudden idea, an inspiration from above, occurred to me. I felt in the pocket of my coat—my fusee-box was there. Then, rushing to the wall, I began tracing the scene of the murder with inconceivable rapidity. There was no more uncertainty, no more groping. I knew the man . . . I saw him . . . he was there before me.

At ten o'clock the jailer entered my prison. His owl-like passiveness was replaced by admiration.

"Is it possible?" cried he, stopping short on the threshold.

"Go and fetch my judges," said I to him, while I continued my work with increasing excitement.

"They are waiting for you in the hall of instruction," replied Schlüssel.

"I have something to reveal to them," I exclaimed, drawing the last hand of my mysterious subject.

He seemed alive; he was fearful to behold; his foreshortened figure stood out wonderfully on the white wall. The jailer went out.

In a few minutes he reappeared with the judges, who stood quite stupefied. I extended my hand, and, trembling in every limb, said to them:

"There is the murderer!"

After a short silence, Von Spreckdal turned to me:

"His name?"

"I do not know it, but he is at this moment in the market; he is cutting up meat in the third stall on the left as you go in from the street of the Trabans."

"What do you think of this?" said he to his colleague.

"Let the man be fetched," replied the other, gravely; several jailers who remained in the passage obeyed this order. The judges remained standing, still looking at the sketch. I had sunk back on the straw, with my head between my knees, quite overcome. Soon footsteps sounded in the distance under the archway. Those who have never awaited an hour of deliverance and counted the minutes, which at such a time are as long as centuries—those who have not gone through the poignant emotions of suspense, terror, hope, doubt—cannot conceive the inward shuddering which I felt at that moment. I should have distinguished the step of the murderer, among a thousand. They came nearer . . . the judges even seemed moved. I had raised my head, and my heart felt oppressed as if with an iron weight. I fixed my eyes on the closed door. It opened . . . the man entered. . . . His cheeks were swollen and red, his large jaws were contracted so that the muscles stood out towards the ears, and his little eyes, uneasy and wild like those of the wolf, glistened under the bushy eyebrows of a yellowish-red.

Von Spreckdal in silence pointed to the sketch. Then this man of blood with the large shoulders looked, grew pale; and with a yell which froze us with terror, he threw up his arms and sprang backwards to upset his jailers. Then a fearful struggle took place in the passage; we heard nothing but the panting breath of the butcher, hollow oaths, hasty words, and the feet of the jailers striking on the flags after they had been lifted into the air. This lasted at least a minute.

At last the murderer re-entered; his head hanging, his eyes blood-shot, his hands fastened behind his back. He again glanced at the drawing of the murder, seemed to reflect, and in a low voice, as if speaking to himself, said: "Who could have seen me at midnight?"

I was saved! . . .

* * * * *

Many years have passed since this terrible adventure. Thank Heaven! I no longer do silhouettes nor even portraits of burgo-

masters. By means of work and perseverance I have conquered my place before the sun, and I gain my bread with honour by doing works of art—the only object, in my opinion, worthy of the true artist's attainment. But I shall never forget the nocturnal sketch. Sometimes, in the very midst of my work, my memory goes back to it. Then I put down my palette and dream for hours! How could a crime, perpetrated by a man whom I did not know, in a house that I had never seen, be reproduced by my pencil down to the slightest detail? Was it chance? Ha! And, after all, what is chance but the effect of a cause which is hidden from us?

Can Schiller be right when he says: "The immortal soul does not share in the weaknesses of the body; during the sleep of the body she spreads her radiant wings, and goes God alone knows where! What does she do then? . . . No one can say, but at times inspiration betrays the secret of those nocturnal flights."

Who knows? Nature is more audacious in her realities than the human mind in its imagination!

Sworn on the Crucifix.

From the French of H. de Balzac.

A LITTLE beyond the boundary of the town of Vendôme, on the banks of the Loir, stands a gloomy old house with a high steep roof. It is quite solitary, not even those almost inseparable parasites of a little town—the unsavoury tan-yard or the wretched *auberge*—are to be found near it. Between it and the river is a garden. Here the box borders, which once were closely trimmed to mark the edges of the paths, now spread where and as they will. A line of willows, the river's offspring, has shot upwards, and hides the dwelling on that side as effectually as a hedge. Noxious rank weeds cover the sloping river banks with their graceful vegetation. Fruit-trees, which bear fruit no longer, and which have been uncared for the last ten years, have thrust out their boughs in every direction, and have straggled into a thick brushwood. The untrimmed espaliers project like arbours. The paths were at one time neatly gravelled; but now they are choked up with purslain, so that there is scarce a sign of path left visible. A spectator looking down from the hill, the side of which is cumbered with the ruins of the ancient château of the dukes of Vendôme—the only point of view which commands this secluded spot—would say that at some past time this was the favourite retreat of some country gentleman delighting in his roses and lilies—a lover of gardening, in fact, and before all things a lover of good fruit. He would see a summer-house, or rather the remains of one, and in its shade a table, not yet quite eaten away by time. At the sight of this wilderness, once a garden, the tranquil joys of a peaceful country life rise up before the imagination; and, to supplement these ideas, half sad and half sweet, one of the walls presents to the eye a sun-dial, with an inscription breathing the spirit of a narrow and homely Christianity: "*Ultimam cogita.*" The roof of the house is dilapidated; its shutters are always closed; its balconies are covered with swallows' nests, and its doors are always shut. Tall weeds have taken root in the interstices of the stonework, and everything that is iron is rust-eaten. The moon and the sun, summer and winter and snow, have dug their way into the woodwork, warped the beams, and fretted away the paint.

The melancholy silence which prevails in this spot is disturbed only by birds, cats, weasels, rats, and mice, who are free to move about, fight, and devour one another, as they will. An invisible hand has

written on all the place the word, mystery. If, driven by curiosity, you went to look at the side of the house which faces the road, you would see a large door, round at the top, riddled with holes by the children of the neighbourhood, who had doomed it to destruction ten years ago. Through the gaps in it one can see that perfect harmony exists between the deserted interior and the decay and ruin without. The same disorder reigns here also. The paving-stones in the courtyard are pushed away by tufts of weeds. The walls are furrowed with enormous cracks. The steps are thrust out of their places; the bell-cord is rotten; the spouts are broken. "Has fire fallen from heaven and passed over the place? Or has some tribunal condemned it to be sown with salt? Did its owners insult their God, or betray their country?" Such are the questions which suggest themselves; but there is no one to answer them. The empty deserted house is an enigma, of which none can tell the meaning. It was formerly a little freehold farm, and it bears the name of La Grande Bretèche. During my stay at Vendôme, whither I had gone to attend a patient, it was one of my few pleasures to contemplate this strange abode. It was better than an historical ruin. Such a ruin is the centre of a group of memories of unimpeachable authenticity; but this habitation, still erect, though its destruction was being accomplished slowly by some avenging hand, held within it a secret—a thought unknown to the world outside. More than once in the evening I essayed to scale the formidable hedge which guarded the enclosure. Defying scratches, I entered this ownerless garden, this domain in which neither the state nor the individual seemed to assert any right of possession, and I remained there whole hours observing its disorder. I would not, even with the prospect of learning the history which lay doubtless at the bottom of this weird sight, have asked a single question of the gossiping people of Vendôme; but wandering there, I composed delightful romances, and gave myself up to the luxury of melancholy. Had I known the possibly commonplace reason why the place had been deserted, I should have lost all the unpublished poems which then intoxicated my imagination. To me this retreat was typical of the most varied phases of human life, with the shadow of human woe upon them all: sometimes it breathed the air of a cloister untenanted by monks; sometimes it suggested the peace of a cemetery, in which there are no dead to speak to one in their language of epitaph; to-day it was the house of a leper; to-morrow the palace of the Atridæ; but at all times it called up a picture of the country, with its limited notions and unobtrusive life, whose monotony seems always to be regulated by the hour-glass. As I was rambling about my dream-kingdom one evening, the wind caused an old rusty weathercock to turn; the cry it uttered seemed to be the groan wrung from the house itself at the moment when I finished a drama, tragic enough in

its plot, by which I accounted for this monument of sorrow. I shuddered, and I returned to my *auberge*, a prey to the gloomiest thoughts. After supper my hostess entered my chamber with an air of mystery, and said :

“ M. Regnault is here, monsieur.”

“ Who is M. Regnault ? ”

“ It can't be that you don't know M. Regnault,” she said, as she went away.

Presently there appeared before me a tall lank man, dressed in black and holding his hat in his hand, who, with his retreating forehead, his little conical head, and his pale face of the colour of muddy water, entered the room like a ram ready to charge at his rival. The unknown wore a threadbare black coat ; but he had a diamond in his shirt frill and gold rings in his ears.

“ With whom have I the honour of speaking, monsieur ? ” I asked.

He took a chair and seated himself in front of the fire, laid his hat upon the table, began to rub his hands, and said :

“ How cold it is ! I am M. Regnault, monsieur.”

I bowed.

“ I am,” he went on, “ a notary, at Vendôme.”

“ Charmed to hear it, monsieur,” I exclaimed, “ but I have no idea of making my will at present, for reasons well known to myself.”

“ One moment,” he said, raising his hand to enjoin silence. “ Pardon me, monsieur, pardon me, but I am told that you sometimes go and walk about the garden at La Grande Bretèche ? ”

“ Yes, monsieur.”

“ One moment,” he said, repeating the gesture with his hand. “ It is a legal offence. I come, monsieur, in the name and as the executor of the late Countess de Merret to beg you to discontinue your visits. One moment. I am not a Turk, and I don't want to make out that it is a crime. Besides, it is only natural that you should be ignorant of the circumstances which compel me to allow the most eligible family residence in Vendôme to fall into ruin. At the same time, monsieur, you appear to have some education, and you ought to know that the law prohibits, under heavy penalties, the intrusion of a stranger into property which is shut up by the owner. A hedge is as good as a wall. But the present state of the house may serve as an excuse for your curiosity. There is nothing I should like better than to give you the run of the place ; but, charged as I am with the execution of the will of Madame de Merret, the testatrix, I have the honour, monsieur, to beg that you will not enter the garden again. I myself, monsieur, have never, since the opening of the will, set my foot within the house, which, I have the honour to inform you, is part of the property left by Madame de Merret. We have only taken an inventory of the doors and windows in order to assess the taxes, which

I pay yearly out of funds set apart for the purpose by the late Countess. Ah! my dear monsieur, her will made a great sensation in Vendôme!”

He stopped to blow his nose. I respected his loquacity, perceiving at a glance that the administration of Madame de Merret's estate was the most important event in his life—that his reputation and his glory rested thereon.

“Monsieur,” I asked, “should I be indiscreet in inquiring the reason of this strange state of things?”

He looked as pleased as a man set riding on his hobby always looks. He arranged the collar of his shirt, complacently drew his snuffbox from his pocket, opened it, and offered it to me; and when I refused he took a huge pinch. He was happy now. The man who has no hobby does not know all the value which can be got out of life.

“Monsieur,” said M. Regnault, “I used to be Maître Roguin's head clerk at Paris. He had an excellent business, of which, I dare say, you have heard?—No? His name was, however, well enough known by reason of his unfortunate failure. I had not sufficient money to live at Paris when the prices were so high in 1816, and so I came here and purchased the business of my predecessor. I had some relations at Vendôme, among them a very rich aunt, who has since given me her daughter in marriage. Monsieur,” he continued, after a slight pause, “three months after I had been admitted to practice by Monseigneur the Garde des Sceaux, I was sent for one evening by the Countess de Merret to her Château of Merret. Her maid, a good girl, who is now servant at this hotel, came to my door with the Countess's carriage to fetch me. I must tell you that the Count de Merret had gone to Paris and died there two months before my arrival here. He died in a wretched state, the victim of excesses of every kind. The day of his departure Madame de Merret had left La Grande Bretèche, and had caused it to be dismantled. Some people declare that she even burned the furniture. Have you been at Merret? No?” he said, supplying my answer. “Ah! it is a beautiful place. For the space of about three months,” he continued, after a little toss of the head, “the Count and Countess had lived together there in the strangest manner; they left off receiving visitors, and madame lived on the ground floor while monsieur lived on the first floor. When the Countess was alone she was never seen, except at church. Later on, at home, in her own château, she refused to see any visitors, whether male or female. A great change passed over her at the moment when she left La Grande Bretèche to go to Merret. The dear creature—I say dear, because this diamond was her present; apart from this I only saw her once—well, the good lady was very ill; she had doubtless given up all thoughts of recovery, for she refused to call in any physician. My

curiosity was singularly excited, monsieur, when I heard that Madame de Merret was in need of my services—and I was not the only person who took an interest in the matter. The same evening, late as it was, the whole town knew that I had gone to Merret. The maid answered the questions I put to her on our way vaguely enough. She told me, however, that her mistress had received the last sacraments at the hands of the *curé* of Merret during the day, and it did not seem likely that she would survive the night. It was nearly eleven o'clock when I reached the château. I went up the grand staircase. After passing through some dark lofty rooms, which were cold and damp, I came to the state chamber, in which the Countess was. I had some difficulty in finding her on the huge bed where she was lying, though there was one of those old-fashioned Argand lamps which was intended to light her enormous bedroom. What a bedroom it was! It was hung with frieze in the fashion of the *ancien régime*, and the hangings were so covered with dust that the very sight of them made me sneeze. But you have never been at Merret? Well, monsieur, the bed was one of those which were common in the times of our great-grandfathers, with a high canopy and curtains of crimson damask. There was a small table beside the bed, and upon it I saw a 'De Imitatione'—which, by the way, I bought afterwards for my wife, together with the lamp. There was also a large arm-chair for the nurse, and two other chairs. Not a bit of fire however. This was all the furniture. It would not have occupied ten lines in an inventory. The room was like ice, nay, more than that, it was funereal," he added, raising his hand in a theatrical manner and making a pause.

"By dint of looking, as I came near the bed, I at last saw Madame de Merret, thanks to the reflection of the lamp on her pillow. Her face was as yellow as wax, bony and angular. She wore a lace cap which allowed her hair to be seen. It was beautiful, but white as flax. She was sitting propped up in her bed. Her brow was damp. Her fleshless hands were nothing more than bones with the skin stretched over them; the veins and sinews were perfectly visible. She must have been at one time extremely beautiful; but now I was seized with a feeling I can't describe at the sight of her. Never—if what those who placed her in her coffin say be true—did living creature become as thin as she did. It was, in short, a fearful sight. Although my professional duties had familiarised me with such spectacles, conducting me from time to time to the bedsides of the dying to ascertain their last wishes, I confess that the families in tears and the agonies I have witnessed elsewhere were nothing in comparison to this woman in the solitude and silence of her vast château. I did not hear the least sound; I did not see the movement which one would have expected her breathing to cause in the clothes which covered her, and I

stood quite still, looking at her in a kind of stupor. At last her great eyes moved; she tried to raise her right hand, but it fell upon the bed; and these words proceeded from her mouth like a whisper, for she could scarcely be said to have a voice: 'I have waited for you with much impatience.' The effort to speak brought a momentary flush to her cheek. 'Madame,' I began. She made a sign to me to be silent. At this moment the old nurse got up and said in my ear: 'Don't speak; madame is in such a state that she cannot bear to hear the least noise, and what you want to say would agitate her perhaps.' I sat down. A few seconds after Madame de Merret mustered all her remaining strength to move her right arm, and put it, not without infinite difficulty, beneath her pillow. She stopped for a moment, and then she made a last effort to draw back her hand. She brought out a sealed packet, and when she did so drops of sweat fell from her forehead. 'I give my will into your charge,' she said. 'Ah! my God! ah!' This was all. She caught up a crucifix which was upon her bed, pressed it rapidly to her lips, and died. The fixed expression of her eyes makes me shudder still, when I think of it. She must have suffered much! There was a sense of joy in her last look, and it dwelt upon her face when she was dead. I carried the will away with me, and when it was opened I saw that she had appointed me her executor. She left all her property, with the exception of some trifling legacies, to the hospital at Vendôme. But her dispositions with regard to La Grande Bretèche were as follows. She directed me to leave the house for fifty years, to be reckoned from the date of her death, in the state in which it should be found at the moment of her decease, forbidding access to the apartments to all persons whomsoever, declaring that no repairs of any kind were to be made, and even providing a fund for the payment of a watchman, if this should be necessary, in order to insure the complete execution of her intentions. If, at the end of this term, the wishes of the testatrix had been strictly fulfilled the house was to go to my heirs, for monsieur knows that notaries are not permitted to receive legacies; otherwise La Grande Bretèche was to revert to the right heirs of the testatrix, as the law should direct, subject however to a proviso, that the conditions contained in a codicil annexed to the will, and which was not to be opened before the expiration of the said term, were to be by them fulfilled. The will was not disputed, and so"—

The tall angular notary did not finish the sentence; but at the last words he looked at me with an air of triumph. I made him at once completely happy by complimenting him on his story.

"Monsieur," I said, "you have interested me deeply; I can fancy that I see her now before me, dying, paler than her winding-sheet; her brilliant eyes fill me with fear; I shall dream of her to-night.

But you must have formed some conjecture regarding the dispositions of this eccentric will?"

"Monsieur," he said, with comical reserve, "I never allow myself to pass a judgment on people who have done me the honour of presenting me with a diamond."

After a little more discussion of the matter, which led to nothing more interesting than a detailed account of all the conjectures of all the good people in the town concerning the mysterious codicil, M. Regnault took his leave, in high good humour. Then I sat down, placed my feet on the two dogs in the fireplace, and was plunging into a romance of the Radcliffe type, based upon the information I had received from the legal lips of M. Regnault, when my door was opened, and my hostess—a fat, radiant, good-tempered person—entered the room.

"Well, monsieur," she said, "I suppose M. Regnault has been giving you his eternal story about La Grande Bretèche?"

"He has, Mère Lepas."

"What did he tell you?"

I repeated in a few words the grim freezing history of Madame de Merret. At each sentence, my hostess stretched her neck forward, regarding me with the *aubergiste's* habitual perspicacity—a quality which combines something of the instinct of the *gendarme* with the astuteness of the spy and the cunning of the tradesman.

"My dear Dame Lepas," I added in conclusion, "you seem to know something more about the matter, eh? If not, why have you come up into my room?"

"Ah! on my faith as an honest woman, as truly as my name is Lepas"——

"No oaths, please; your eyes are big with some secret. You knew M. de Merret. What kind of a man was he?"

"M. de Merret was a fine man, and a good sort of a gentleman. He came from Picardy, and he was as hot as a pepper-box, as we say. He paid ready money for everything, he made no difficulties with any one. He was rather wild, and the ladies found him very agreeable."

"What! because he was rather wild?" I asked my hostess.

"Very likely," she said. "You may suppose that he had something to recommend him when he could marry Madame de Merret, who—without wishing to say anything against the others—was the most beautiful and the wealthiest match in the country. She had near about twenty thousand livres a year. The whole town was at the wedding. The bride was a little engaging creature, quite a jewel of a woman. Ah! they made a lovely couple!"

"Were they happy in their married life?"

"H'm! H'm! Yes and no—so far, at least, as one can judge; for you don't suppose that we townfolk lived hand and glove with them.

Madame de Merret was a good little woman, very quiet, and she had a good deal to bear sometimes ; but, though he was a little proud, we liked him. Bah ! it was natural for him to be like that. When one's a gentleman, you see"——

"But there must have been some catastrophe, to make them separate in the violent way they did ?"

"I never said there was any catastrophe. I don't know anything at all about it."

"I am quite sure now you know everything."

"Well, monsieur, I'll tell you all about it. When I saw M. Regnault go up to your room I thought he was going to speak to you about Madame de Merret and La Grande Bretèche. That gave me the idea of asking Monsieur's advice, for you seem to be prudent and incapable of betraying a poor woman like me, who has never done harm to any one, and who is nevertheless tormented by her conscience. Till now, I have never dared to open my lips to any of the people about, for they are never tired of wagging their tongues, and, monsieur, I have never had a traveller who stayed so long as you in my *auberge* and to whom I could tell the story of the fifteen thousand francs."

"My dear Dame Lepas," I said, stopping the flow of her words, "if your secret is of a nature to compromise me I would not for worlds take it upon my shoulders."

"Don't be afraid," she said, interrupting me. "You shall see."

Her eagerness led me to believe that I was not the only person to whom my good landlady had imparted the secret of which I was to be the sole depositary, and I listened.

"Monsieur," she said, "the Emperor sent some Spanish or other prisoners of war to this place, and I had to take in, at the expense of the government, a young Spaniard, who came here on parole. Notwithstanding his parole he went every day to report himself to the *sous-préfet*. He was a grandee of Spain—excuse me a moment—his names ended in *os* and *dia* ; it was something like Bagos de Férédia. I have it down in my register, and you can see it if you like. Ah ! he was a handsome young man for a Spaniard ; they say they are all plain-looking. He was only five feet two or three inches in height, but he was well-made ; he had small hands, and he took great care of them—ah ! you should have seen. He had as many brushes for his hands as a woman has for her whole toilet ! He had long black hair and his eyes were as bright as fire ; his skin was slightly copper-coloured, but I admired him all the same. The linen he wore was the finest I have ever seen on any one, though I have entertained princesses, and amongst others, General Bertrand, the Duc and the Duchesse d'Abrantes, M. Decazes, and the King of Spain. He didn't eat much, but his manners were so polished and courteous that one

couldn't complain. Indeed I was very fond of him, though he didn't say four words a day, and it was impossible to keep up the least conversation with him; if you spoke to him he didn't answer. It is a peculiarity they all have, they say. He read his breviary like a priest, and went to mass and all the offices regularly. And where do you think he sat?—we remembered that afterwards—scarcely two yards from Madame de Merret's chair. He took up his position there the first time he went to the church, and no one imagined there was any design in what he did. Besides, he never raised his eyes from his book, poor young man! Then, monsieur, he took to wandering about in the evening on the hill among the ruins of the château. It was his only amusement, poor man! And then he thought about his country, where they say there is nothing but hills. After the first few days of his detention here he began to be later out of nights. I was uneasy when I saw that he did not come home till midnight; but we got accustomed to his whim; he took the door-key with him, and we paid no more attention to him. He was lodging with us in the house we had then in the Rue des Casernes. Then one of the grooms told us that one evening, when he went to wash the horses in the river, he thought he saw our Spanish grandee swimming at a distance just like a fish. When he returned I told him to take care of the weeds, and he didn't seem to like the idea of having been seen in the water. Finally, monsieur, one day, or rather, one morning, we did not find him in his chamber; he had not come back at all. I searched everywhere, and found something written on a piece of paper in his table drawer, in which there were also fifty golden Spanish coins, called *portagues*, worth about five thousand francs; there were besides some diamonds, of the value of ten thousand francs, in a little sealed box. The writing was to the effect that, in case he should not return he left his money and diamonds for masses to thank God for his escape and to pray for his safety. At that time my husband was still alive, and he went off to search for him—and this is the queerest part of the story. My husband brought back the Spaniard's clothes, which he had found under a big stone on the bank of the river, near the château and almost opposite La Grande Bretèche. He had gone there so early in the morning that no one had seen him, and so, when he had read the letter, he burnt the clothes, and we declared, as Count Férédia wished, that he had escaped. The *sous-préfet* put all the *gendarmes* on the alert, but they never caught him. Lepas thought that the Spaniard was drowned. But I, monsieur, am of a different opinion; I am inclined to believe that he had something to do with Madame de Merret. Rosalie has told me that the crucifix her mistress was so fond of, and which she had buried with her, was made of ebony and silver; now when he first began to live with us M. Férédia had a crucifix of ebony and silver, and I have never seen

it since. So, monsieur, you don't think I need feel any remorse about the Spaniard's fifteen thousand francs—and have I not a perfect right to them?"

"Undoubtedly. But have you never asked any questions of Rosalie?"

"Indeed I have, monsieur; but it's no good; she won't answer, any more than a stone wall. She knows something, but I can't get it out of her."

My hostess talked with me a minute or two longer, and then left me, a prey to vague and sombre thoughts. Rosalie became in my eyes the most interesting being in Vendôme. As I watched her I discovered the traces of something locked within her breast, spite of the florid health which beamed in her plump face. She had some hidden cause for remorse or for hope; her very attitude always betrayed the fact that she had a secret. Her bearing was, however, artless and homely, and her silly thoughtless laugh was far from suggesting any idea of criminality. You would have passed a verdict of not guilty the moment you saw the large red and blue checked handkerchief which covered her full bosom, and the tightly fitting dress with white and violet stripes which set off her figure so well.

"No," I thought, "I will not leave Vendôme till I know the whole history of La Grande Bretèche. To gain my end I will even, if necessary, make serious love to Rosalie."

I need not dwell on this portion of my story. It took me a full month to gain Rosalie's good graces and confidence, but when I felt that I might do so safely, I broached to her the subject of my unsleeping curiosity.

"Rosalie," I said to her, one evening.

"Yes, monsieur?"

"How is it you are not married?"

"Oh! there are plenty of men who will have me, when I want to be made miserable," she said, laughing.

"Of course, a pretty girl like you can never be in want of lovers. But tell me, Rosalie, why did you become a servant at an *auberge* when you left Madame de Merret? Didn't she make any provision for you?"

"Indeed she did, monsieur. But my place is the best in Vendôme."

"Rosalie," said I, coaxingly, "tell me all you know about Madame de Merret."

"Oh! don't ask me that, Monsieur Horace!" she answered, with a look of terror.

Her countenance fell, her bright and lively colour faded, and her eyes lost their liquid sparkle of innocence. Still, however, I insisted.

"Well," she said, "since you wish it, I will tell; but you will keep my secret?"

"Pooh! my dear child, I will keep all your secrets with the honesty of a thief; nothing can be safer than that."

"If it is all the same to you," she said, "I would rather you kept them with your own."

In the following pages the reader will find a cold abridgment of the awful story which the girl told me in her garrulous way.

The bedroom occupied by Madame de Merret at La Bretèche was on the ground floor. A little closet, about four feet deep, let into the wall, served for her wardrobe. For three months before the evening the events of which I am going to relate to you she had been seriously indisposed, and her husband had accordingly slept in a chamber on the first floor. By one of those accidents which it is impossible to foresee, he returned on the evening in question two hours later than usual from the club which he frequented. His wife thought that he had come in long before and gone to bed, and that he was asleep. But the invasion of France had been the subject of an animated discussion; the game of billiards had been exciting, and he had lost forty francs—an enormous sum at Vendôme, where everybody lays his money by, and where the habits of the people are contained within the bounds of a praiseworthy moderation—the source perhaps of a real happiness undreamed of by any Parisian. For some time past M. de Merret had contented himself with asking Rosalie if his wife had gone to bed, and after the girl's answer, which was invariably in the affirmative, he had retired at once to his chamber. But this time it occurred to him to go into Madame de Merret's room to give her an account of his ill-luck. Instead of calling Rosalie, who was at this moment in the kitchen, looking on while the cook and coachman played a difficult hand at *brisque*, M. de Merret set down his hand-lamp upon the bottom step of the staircase, and walked by its light towards his wife's room. His step was not difficult to recognise as it echoed along the corridor. As he turned the handle he thought he heard some one close the door of the closet; when however he entered, Madame de Merret was alone, standing before the fireplace. The husband, in his simplicity, thought at first that Rosalie was in the closet; but when he looked at his wife he found in her eyes an indescribable trouble and dismay.

"You are very late," she said.

Her voice, generally so pure and sweet, seemed to him to be slightly altered in its tone. M. de Merret did not answer, for just at this moment Rosalie entered. This revelation struck him like a thunder-bolt. He began to walk up and down the room between the windows at a uniform pace, his arms folded before him.

"Have you heard anything to annoy you, or are you unwell?" his wife asked him timidly, while Rosalie undressed her.

He was still silent.

"Leave me," said Madame de Merret to her maid, "I will curl my hair myself."

The expression of her husband's face told her to prepare for some misfortune, and she wished to be alone with him. When Rosalie was gone, or supposed to be gone, for she remained some instants in the corridor, M. de Merret took a seat in front of his wife, and said coldly :

"Madame, there is some one in your dressing closet."

She looked at her husband calmly, and said with an air of simplicity :

"No, monsieur."

This "no" dumfounded M. de Merret. He did not believe it ; and yet never had his wife appeared to him more dignified and innocent than at this moment. He rose to open the closet ; but Madame de Merret took his hand, held him back, and looked at him sadly, saying to him in a tone of peculiar emotion :

"If you find no one, remember that all will be over between us."

The incredible dignity of his wife's attitude created in him a profound sentiment of esteem for her, and inspired him with a sudden resolution.

"Then, Joséphine, I will not open that door. In either case, we should be separated for ever. Listen to me ! I know all the purity of your soul ; I know that the life you lead is religious ; you would not be guilty of a deadly sin to save your life."

At these words, Madame de Merret looked at her husband with haggard eyes.

"See, here is your crucifix," he went on. "Swear to me before God that there is no one there : I will believe you—I will never open that door."

Madame de Merret took the crucifix, and said :

"I swear it."

"Louder," said her husband, "and repeat my words : 'I swear before God that there is no one in that closet.'"

She repeated the oath without a sign of disquietude.

"It is well," said M. de Merret coldly, and then, after a moment's silence :

"You have a very pretty crucifix there, which I have not seen," he said, as he examined the crucifix. It was of ebony, inlaid with silver, and the work showed great artistic skill.

"I picked it up at Duvivier's ; he bought it of a Spanish monk, when the prisoners passed through Vendôme last year."

"Oh !" said M. de Merret, hanging up the crucifix again upon its nail.

He rang the bell. Rosalie did not keep him waiting. He went hastily to meet her, took her into the embrasure of the window which looked out upon the garden, and said to her in a low voice :

"I know that Gorenflot wants to marry you, and it is only poverty

that prevents you from settling down ; you have told him that you will not be his wife until he has made himself master mason. Well, go and find him, and tell him to come here with his trowel and the rest of his tools. Take care not to awaken anybody else in his house : his fortune shall be more than you can wish. Whatever you do, keep your tongue quiet as you go out, otherwise"—

He knit his brow : Rosalie was going off, but he called her back :

"Stop," he said, "take my key." The Count went to the door which opened on the corridor, and called loudly, "Jean."

Jean, who was his coachman and his confidential servant, left his game of *brisque*, and came to him.

"You must all of you go to bed," said his master, at the same time making a sign to him to come nearer.

And then he added in a low voice :

"When they are all asleep—asleep, you understand—come downstairs, and let me know."

M. de Merret, who had never lost sight of his wife while he gave his orders, returned quietly to her as she sat before the fire, and began to tell her about the game of billiards and the discussion at the club, and when Rosalie came back she found the two conversing together very amicably. M. de Merret had lately had the ceilings throughout the reception-rooms on the ground-floor repaired. Plaster is a rare commodity at Vendôme, and its price is considerably increased by the necessity of conveying it from a distance ; he had accordingly got in a large stock, knowing that he would always find plenty of purchasers for what remained. This circumstance suggested the plan which he now put into execution.

"Gorenflot is here, monsieur," said Rosalie, in a low voice.

"Tell him to come in," answered the Count, in his natural tone.

A slight pallor came over Madame de Merret's face when she saw the mason.

"Gorenflot," said the husband, "go and fetch some bricks from the coach-house—enough to build up the door of this closet. You can use the rest of the plaster I had in to coat over the wall."

Then drawing Rosalie and the workman aside :

"Listen, Gorenflot," he said, in a low voice, "you will sleep here to-night. To-morrow morning you shall have a passport, with which you can go to a foreign country, to a town which I will direct you to. I will give you six thousand francs for your journey. You will stay there ten years. If you don't like the town I choose you can change it for another, but it must be in the same country. You will pass through Paris, where you must wait for me. I will meet you there and execute a deed, by which another six thousand will be secured to you on your return to France, supposing you have fulfilled on your part the conditions of our bargain. In return for this you must pre-

serve profound secrecy with regard to all that you have to do to-night. As for you, Rosalie, I will give you ten thousand francs, to be paid to you on your wedding day, provided that you marry Gorenflot; but if you wish to marry you must be silent, otherwise no portion."

"Rosalie," said Madame de Merret, "come and dress my hair."

Her husband walked calmly up and down, watching the door, the mason, and his wife, without however insulting her by any sign of suspicion. Gorenflot could not avoid making a noise, and Madame de Merret took advantage of the moment, when Gorenflot threw down his load of bricks, and her husband was at the other end of the room, to say to Rosalie:

"A thousand francs a year, if you can manage to tell Gorenflot to leave a crevice at the bottom."

Then she said aloud, without betraying any emotion:

"Go and help him."

M. and Madame de Merret remained silent during the whole time Gorenflot was walling up the doorway. This silence was intentional on the husband's part, for he did not wish to give his wife the opportunity of using phrases with a double meaning; with the wife it was the result either of caution or of pride. When the wall had risen to half its intended height, the cunning mason, waiting for a moment when his employer's back was turned, struck the tool he was using against one of the two windows which were let into the door, and broke the glass. Madame de Merret knew that Rosalie had spoken to Gorenflot. The three saw a man's face within—dark and sad, with black hair and eyes of fire. Before her husband had turned round, the poor lady had time to signal with her lips to the man, as if to bid him hope. At four o'clock, towards daybreak—for it was in the month of September—the mason's task was finished. He remained in the house under the eye of Jean, while M. de Merret slept in his wife's chamber. The next morning, as he rose, he said carelessly:

"Ah! I must go to the *mairie* for the passport."

He put on his hat, and took three steps towards the door; he then changed his intention, and took the crucifix with him. His wife trembled with delight.

"He is going to Duvivier," she thought.

As soon as her husband had gone out, Madame de Merret rang for Rosalie; and then, in a wild voice:

"The pickaxe! the pickaxe!" she cried, "and to work! I saw yesterday how Gorenflot set about it: we shall have time to make an outlet and block it up again."

In an instant Rosalie brought a kind of a chopper to her mistress, who with inconceivable energy undertook the task of pulling down the wall. She had already displaced some of the bricks, when, just as

she was gathering her strength to apply a yet more vigorous blow, she saw M. de Merret behind her. She fainted.

"Place madame upon her bed," he said coldly.

Foreseeing what would probably happen during his absence, he had set a trap for his wife: he had simply written to the *mairie* and sent a messenger for Duvivier. The jeweller arrived just after order had been restored in the room.

"Duvivier," asked M. de Merret, "you bought some crucifixes from the Spaniards who passed through Vendôme, did you not?"

"No, monsieur."

"Thank you, that will do," he said, darting a tiger-like look at his wife. "Jean," he added, turning to his confidential servant, "you will let me have my meals in Madame de Merret's room; she is not well, and I will not leave her until she has recovered."

The cruel husband remained twenty days with his wife. At first, when awful sounds came from behind the barricade, and Joséphine made as if she would implore for mercy for the stranger dying there, he would not allow her to utter a single word, but always said:

"You have sworn upon the crucifix that there is no one there."
